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CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE

AND

MORALS

VIEWED IN THEIR CONNEXION

BEING THE TWENTY-FOURTH FERNLEY LECTURE

DELIVERED IN CARRS LANE CHAPEL, BIRMINGHAM
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BY

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JAMES AND MARY FINDLAY

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Il est aussi inutile de confesser les mystères du Christianisme sans se charger des devoirs, qu'il est impossible de s'imposer les devoirs sans adhèrer aux mystères. Il y a une union intime entre ces deux parties du système évangélique. Les dogmes ne sont là que pour engendre la morale évangélique, qui n'existe, telle qu'elle est, qu'en vertu des dogmes.—A. Vinet.

It is in the influence of Person upon Person that the health of our nature consists.—H. Wace, D.D.

Evangelical religion is founded on the inmost nature of things, the nature of God and man, and the immutable relations between them.—John Wesley.

Ἐδιδάχθητε ἐνδύσασθαι τὸν καινὸν ἄνθρωπον τὸν κατὰ Θεὸν κτισθέντα ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ καὶ ὁσιότητι τῆς ἀληθείας.—The Apostle Paul.

INTRODUCTION

—o—

FIFTEEN years ago to-day, at this same hour, on the occasion of the last Wesleyan Conference in Birmingham, I sat in this famous chapel listening to a discourse on *The Evangelical Revival*, which made a profound impression upon myself, and is not forgotten, I imagine, by any of the many Methodist preachers who were amongst its hearers. The sermon I refer to gives its name to one of Dr R. W. Dale's published volumes. The passage in that powerful and masterly deliverance which most strongly affected my mind at that time bore upon the shortcomings of the evangelical movement of the last and present century in respect of its "moral aims and achievements." Dr Dale affirmed that "the revival had no ethical originality. . . . It ought to have accepted," but did not, "the responsibility of carrying forward the moral reformation which Protestantism had only begun." It "has done as yet," he said, "very little to give us a nobler and more Christian ideal of practical life. . . . It has shrunk from politics. It has regarded literature and art with a certain measure of distrust. In business it has been content with attaching divine sanctions to recognized virtues." The changed conditions of life brought about by modern

progress "have urgently demanded fresh applications of the eternal ideas of the Christian faith to conduct. But evangelical Christians have hardly touched the new ethical problems which have come with the new time." With reference to my own Church in particular, the preacher remarked:

> There was one doctrine of John Wesley's—the doctrine of perfect sanctification—which ought to have led to a great and original ethical development; but the doctrine has not grown; it seems to remain just where John Wesley left it. There has been a want of the genius or the courage to attempt the solution of the immense practical questions which the doctrine suggests. The questions have not been raised—much less solved. To have raised them effectively, indeed, would have been to originate an ethical revolution which would have had a far deeper effect on the thought and life—first of England, and then of Christendom—than was produced by the Reformation of the sixteenth century.[1]

The course of religious thought and activity amongst us during the last fifteen years supplies a remarkable comment on the words that I have read. If we cannot say that we have approached the solution, either upon their doctrinal or practical side, of the problems which Dr Dale set before us at our last Birmingham Conference, some of those problems have at any rate been taken in hand. The ethical questions involved in the relations of evangelical faith to modern society have forced themselves upon us; and their magnitude and urgency are universally felt. The ascendency and continued maintenance of Christianity appear to depend on their solution. We perceive, with a clearness growing painfully intense, that unless the gospel of Christ is made to leaven substantially the

[1] *The Evangelical Revival, and other Sermons*, pp. 33–39. By R. W. Dale.

mass of our complex, and in many respects disordered and unhappy European civilization, unless the victory of the cross is signally renewed in the living world around us, the fruit of the Protestant Reformation and the Evangelical Revival is likely to be scattered, and the ground won for religion and humanity in those two glorious struggles may be shamefully and disastrously lost.

Far, indeed, am I from supposing that any contribution of mine will materially further the settlement of the momentous questions indicated. My object is rather to stimulate thought and enquiry in this direction, especially amongst the younger thinkers and workers of Methodism; and to point out, as clearly and truly as it is in my power, the foundations upon which the Christian construction of society rests, and the lines of faith and hope along which our ethical advancement must be made. The grave words spoken upon the subject from this pulpit so many years ago have never ceased to be present to my thoughts; and the observations that I am about to offer are, in truth, the outcome of the train of reflexion which then originated.

The moral situation has become greatly altered in the eventful interval that has elapsed since the year 1879. Earlier in the seventies Dr Henry Wace had published his Boyle Lectures on *Christianity and Morality*—a work of permanent value and instructiveness, which marked an epoch in the history of not a few Christian students. In that very able and sagacious book the author starts from the assumption that those who were at that time most strenuously opposed to Christianity as a revealed religion, accepted its moral system; they regarded this indeed as the intrinsic part of the teaching of the New Testament,

dismissing its theological dogmas and miraculous phenomena as so much surplusage. It was asserted, and widely supposed, that Christian morals had come to be independent of Christian doctrine, that the ethical principles associated with supernatural religion can be maintained on a purely natural footing, and owe their real force and authority not to the foundations laid for them and the sanctions attached to them in the faith of the Church, but to instinct and social culture and the experience of mankind. Contrasting the religious discussions of his own time with those in which Bishop Butler was engaged in the last century, Dr Wace said:

> Controversies, indeed, of the gravest moment are now prevalent respecting the foundations and the nature of morality; and these controversies are perhaps pregnant with deeper consequences to the practical observance and determination of moral conduct than is generally recognized. If the theory of Utilitarianism were victorious, it has already been made evident by the speculations of some of its advocates that it would not leave Christian practice untouched. But at all events, the supreme necessity, and, in some cases, the supreme obligation, of the more conspicuous principles of Christian morality is fully admitted by all the writers with whom we have practically to deal. It is, indeed, more than admitted; it is erected into the one sole pillar of the new edifice they would establish. Their chief position is that it is really the sum and substance of Christianity itself. . . . The substantial acceptance by our opponents of the moral teaching of Christianity affords us a common ground. We are pursuing, at least in respect of the present life, the same object in principle; and the sole question is by what means we may attain it. They tell me that I am complicating a grand and simple truth with obsolete theological subtleties; I contend that they are obstructing the realization of the very truth they admire, by abandoning the only sure way to it. . . . Such appears to me to be the peculiar aspect of infidelity which now chiefly demands attention.[1]

[1] *Christianity and Morality, or the Correspondence of the Gospel with the Moral Nature of Man: the Boyle Lectures for* 1874 *and* 1875, pp. 5-9. By H. Wace (fourth edition).

That was twenty years ago; and Dr Wace had in his mind such antagonists as the late John Stuart Mill and Matthew Arnold and W. R. Greg, as Professor Tyndall and Professor Huxley. I do not know what opinion he would pronounce upon the present posture of unbelief and the disposition of the forces at this moment arrayed against Christianity. To a considerable extent his estimate still holds good; and there are possibly a larger number of persons to be found now than there were then who declare themselves Christians in ethical conviction, while they wholly reject the dogmas of the Christian creed and the public profession of religion. But we cannot now say that "the obligation of the more conspicuous principles of Christian morality is admitted by all the writers with whom we have practically to deal." A deep moral cleavage has shown itself, which appears to be rapidly widening, between faith and unbelief. We are reverting in this respect to the position of Bishop Butler and the eighteenth century. The public ear is now addressed by a class of teachers, who, if they are less persuasive writers, claim to be more radical thinkers than the utilitarians and agnostics of the generation now passing, and who announce loudly and from the housetops their repudiation of Christian morality and their contempt for the conventions and restrictions it has imposed upon society. However warmly we might contend with unbelievers of the older type, we could at least feel, in very many cases, that they were in sympathy with us in regard to the great moral interests of society, that the same things were pure and lovely and of good report in their eyes as in ours, that such words as decency and self-respect, as honesty and virtue, had the

like meaning in their vocabulary and the like value to their conscience as to our own. The exponents of "the New Ethic"—I refer to such writers as Mr Karl Pearson for example, or Mr E. Belfort Bax, or Mr Grant Allen—give us to understand in the plainest terms that this agreement is at an end. The system of morals inherited from Christianity, which supplied "the one sole pillar of the edifice" that the deniers of our faith were attempting to rear a generation ago, is the object of the scornful and violent hostility of these new builders. They tell us that the ethics of our creed are equally obsolete with its "theological subtleties," that supernatural morals are no less irrational than the supernatural dogmas on which they were founded, that the entire Christian theory of life is decaying as the superstitions wither that gave birth to it and have so long maintained it in the face of a growing scientific enlightenment. Mr Bax writes in his *Ethics of Socialism*:[1]

> If on their intellectual side, as theories of the universe, the older religions are a *non possumus* for us, they are this none the less on their moral side. . . . It is useless blinking the fact that the Christian doctrine is more revolting to the higher moral sense of to-day than the Saturnalia or the cult of Proserpine could have been to the conscience of the early Christian.
>
> The moral side of Christianity is centred in the notions of individual

[1] *Ethics of Socialism*, pp. 46-52. See the same writer's *Religion of Socialism*; Karl Pearson's *Ethic of Free Thought*, the Preface and last section (on Sociology); also Mr Grant Allen's frank and shameless article in the *Fortnightly Review* for March, 1894, entitled "The New Hedonism." It is difficult to express in any measured terms the alarm and abhorrence which the writings above-named excite in a Christian mind. The reviewer scarcely said too much who observed with reference to Mr Grant Allen's manifesto, that we appear to be standing "on the edge of an abyss of filth." The topics here indicated are referred to subsequently on pp. 142 and 199, 200.

holiness and responsibility to a supernatural being. . . . With the growing sense among all earnest men of social utility as the end of all human endeavour, an ethic based on the notion of individual likeness to God is in flagrant contradiction, a contradiction which can only be solved by its formal surrender.

It is not the institutions of property alone that are assailed by the propagators of the doctrines which, under the names of Socialism or Free Thought, are being ventilated in all directions around us. Property has for the most part shown itself able to hold its own; and Christianity is in no way specially bound to the present modes of its production and distribution, nor to the current theories in economics or politics. Its main interest in such matters is "that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life, in all godliness and gravity." We have not forgotten the reply of the Lord Jesus in the case of the inheritance disputed between two brothers: "Man, who made Me a judge or divider over you?" There are interests at stake in this contention more vital than those which concern the safety of moneyed wealth. Domestic purity is threatened. The basis of our family relations, in which lies the core and vital tissue of social and national existence, is openly and resolutely assailed. The struggle is becoming a conflict, as the Romans used to say, *pro aris et focis*—at once for our altars and our hearths, for "the kindred points of heaven and home"! As one of the wisest amongst us writes: "Christians must understand that it is a war *à outrance* that is before us, not as to belief only, but as to all that is holy and pure in life."

While the development of antichristian thought compels us to realize the intimate connexion existing between faith and morals, the general progress of knowledge and research

in other ways tends strongly in the same direction. Sociology, if it has not attained the proper rank of a science, has gathered a large body of observation and laid down a certain number of provisional laws; and it witnesses to the predominant influence of religious belief in the formation of individual and collective character. Human society, we have discovered, as St Paul taught long ago, is an organism, with a continuous evolution, and a vital correlation existing between its several members and functions. This being so, it is inconceivable that the Christian creed and worship on the one hand and the Christian ethics on the other—forces each of them so distinct in nature and so powerful and long continued in their influence upon life and civilization —should have co-existed in one system by a combination that was merely accidental and transitional. The more thoroughly the subject is examined, in the spirit of impartial and comprehensive science, the more evident does it become that religion is the parent of whatever is highest in morality, and that the mighty works which the name and influence of Christ have wrought in mankind are the fruit of faith in his redemption, and spring from the root of the supernatural doctrine which He taught. Historically, and (as one may say) biologically, the Christian creed and Christian conduct are one; they form together the unity of the Christian life.

In illustration of the principle that religion is the sovereign element in the organic constitution of humanity, we may refer to Mr Benjamin Kidd's recent book on *Social Evolution*—a work destined to produce, if we are not mistaken, a deep and salutary effect on modern thought. In another direction, the same lesson is taught

by the late Mr J. R. Green's invaluable *History of the English People*, which shows, as a matter of broad historical fact, that Christian beliefs and aspirations, though imperfectly conceived, have been the most potent factors in the shaping of our national destiny. The early chapters of Professor Alfred Marshall's great work on *The Principles of Economics* may also be cited as affording evidence of the profound effect which religious faith exercises upon industrial energy and economic progress.

The field of thought opened up to us by the consideration of the connexion subsisting between Christian doctrine and morals is immense. Viewed in its entirety, the subject is as wide as history and religion, as large, in fact, as human life. Many topics of great interest and importance, some which will suggest themselves to every hearer or reader, are excluded by the limits imposed upon a work of this nature. We shall confine ourselves strictly to the exposition of what we conceive to be the chief moral implications of the leading and salient doctrines of the Christian faith. Even with this bounded view of the field lying before us, our survey must still be comparatively rapid and incomplete. The leading Christian doctrines, of which we shall attempt the ethical statement and application, are the following: The *fatherhood of God*, the *incarnation of the Son of God*, the *indwelling of the Holy Spirit*, the *atonement for human sin*, the *resurrection of the body*, the *judgement to come*, and the *life eternal*. Other doctrines it would be easy to enumerate, that might fitly be placed by the side of these. The order and relative importance of the great articles of our creed are variously conceived by different minds and in different

schools of thought. The preliminary discussion of method and order, if entered upon, would divert us from our purpose at the present time. It must suffice to say—and this, as we suppose, will be generally admitted—that the seven doctrines named are amongst the most characteristic and influential principles of Christianity; and that, in what they contain or imply, these beliefs may be fairly taken to cover the entire breadth and compass of the religion of Jesus Christ and his apostles and the faith delivered to the saints.

This work may perhaps be regarded, if it be not presumptuous to say so, as a sequel to Dr Davison's Fernley Lecture (1888) on *The Christian Conscience*, and a counterpart to Mr Watkinson's Lecture in the same series (1886), entitled *The Influence of Scepticism on Character*. It is also, in some respects, continuous with Dr Nicholas' Lecture of last year on *Christianity and Socialism*. In these valued books the reader will find many points touching the nature and method of Christian ethics ably and incisively treated, which lie beyond the scope of the present Lecture. Amongst the larger standard works upon the subject, of chief value to a student, are Dorner's *System of Christian Ethics* (marked by thoroughness, philosophical breadth, and deep spiritual insight), Martensen's *Christian Ethics* (in three volumes: diffuse, but always eloquent and interesting, and sometimes profound), Newman Smyth's *Christian Ethics*, and Luthardt's *History of Christian Ethics* (one volume translated, covering the history up to the Reformation).

NOTE.—*The Lecture as orally delivered consisted chiefly of the matter contained in chapters i, ii, vi, and vii of the printed book.*

CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE AND MORALS

CHAPTER I

THE FATHERHOOD OF GOD

Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us.—St Philip the Apostle

Leaving this world to return to God who sent Him, the Lord Jesus thus prayed in the hearing of his disciples: "I have glorified Thee on the earth; I have finished the work which Thou hast given Me to do. . . . I have manifested thy name unto the men whom Thou gavest Me." That "name" of God manifested by Jesus Christ to men is the name of *Father*. Under this character He has glorified God, making the moral splendour and power of the divine existence visible. To do this was his mission. Jesus Christ makes many revelations, but all others are a part of this one revelation; they are incidental or auxiliary to it, or inferences from it. He reveals Himself as the Son of God; but it is for the glory of the Father, that men may recognise the Father who has sent Him. He shows the way of salvation; but this salvation is nothing else than the soul's return to God, its recovery of the lost Father. "O righteous Father," He cries in the last words of his intercession, "the world hath not known Thee, but

I have known Thee; and these have known that Thou didst send Me. And I made known to them thy name, and will make it known; that the love wherewith Thou lovedst Me may be in them, and I in them."[1]

Here then is the foundation of our religion. The Creed begins, "I believe in God the Father Almighty." Christianity is the doctrine of the Fatherhood of God; it is a system of belief and conduct based upon that fact. He who knows this, who sees this one truth as Christ shows it, knows virtually everything that Christianity has to teach. He is a Christian believer; he has eternal life. By the coming of the Son of God into the world, by his living, teaching, dying, rising, and ascending to heaven, He has said to mankind, He says to each man, *God is thy Father.* He persuades and enables us to believe this, and to behave accordingly. There is the entire gospel. Christ comes to us with a message from God: that message is the statement of God's personal relationship to men, of his disposition and intentions towards them and his will concerning them. The word "Father" denotes this, if it is not an empty sound or idle play of the imagination; it signifies that there is that in our human being which is derived immediately from God, which makes us objects of personal affection on the part of God and capable of a moral fellowship with Him. And the announcement is made expressly with the purpose of establishing such a fellowship. Christ is the mediator, the divine ambassador and commissioner, whose business it is to reconcile mankind, individually and collectively, to God, to restore the just relations between the Father and his earthly children and to bring the latter

[1] John xvii.

into a right attitude and behaviour towards Him,—in a word, to reconstitute the family of God on earth.

Now what is this but to say that the gospel of Jesus Christ is an *ethical* revelation? It is a disclosure of the spirit and temper and principles, and relations towards each other, of certain persons concerned in it; *viz.* God, Christ, and mankind. It is a body of truth intrinsically moral in contents and aim, while it is metaphysical or speculative in its ulterior sense, by implication and presupposition. Surveyed from the evangelical standpoint, ethics and dogma are one; theology is essentially moral, and morals are essentially theological.

God is your Father, says He to us, who came forth from the Father into the world. But we must understand the subject as well as the predicate of this sentence. The name of GOD is, in truth, stamped on the world and on the soul as the Maker's mark on his work. It has never been lost to human knowledge, though obscured, desecrated, and broken into fragments by idolatry, with the progress of which moral corruption has kept even pace. Only in one nation a simple faith in God and a purer ethics had been preserved. The Jewish Bible is the monument of that favoured people. Jesus and his disciples stood upon Old Testament ground. He works on the basis furnished by the law and the prophets, and with the material accumulated by two thousand years of divine education in Israel. His inspired predecessors, the "other men" of whom the Lord once spoke, who "laboured" in the cause of the true religion before Him, had built up a solid and sublime doctrine of God, on which it remained for Him to set the topstone. The Judaism of his time had overlaid this

foundation with its crust of perverse traditions. He "came not to destroy, but to fulfil." He restored and completed the Old Testament theology. Jesus Christ addresses the world in the name of the God of Abraham and Moses and Elijah, the God of the Hebrew fathers,—"of whom," He declares to the Jewish teachers of his day, "you say that He is your God, and you have not known Him!"

What then was this God of Israel, whom Jesus Christ, speaking to all men, names "my Father, and your Father"? He was the one, real God, the Eternal, the Almighty, the Omnipresent, the All-wise,—*the Holy One.* In this last designation the moral attributes of the divine being are summed up; they are carried to their transcendent height and centred in their burning focus: God's intrinsic purity, infinitely removed from and unceasingly hostile to all impurity in his creatures, his righteousness and his mercifulness in dealing with men, his integrity and self-consistency and perfect truth of being and of act. He is known as the creator and sustainer of the fabric of nature, wholly distinct from and supreme over the world He has made, but intimately present to it in every part. Man, the latest of his visible works, He formed to be the image of Himself, tenant and lord of the earth from which his body has been shaped. Over men He exercises therefore a moral and disciplinary rule. He is the King of the nations and of the ages, the unseen but all-watchful Judge and Overseer of human affairs; and a day is coming when his judgements will be disclosed and his rectitude vindicated before the universe.

Unknown to the nations who had departed from Him, the God of Israel makes Himself known through a suc-

cession of chosen and fitting organs, the prophets of Jehovah. Through Moses He declares to Israel, and through Israel to the world, I AM. This stupendous self-assertion of the living God was enshrined in the name affixed to his covenant with the sons of Abraham and put into their mouth — the later Jews veiled it from themselves in their Scriptures out of very fear—that great and dread name Jehovah. This word means, simply and sufficiently understood, HE IS.[1] Not the *He is* of bare existence, but of a continuous, immutable, ever-active Holy Will,—the Presence behind all presences, the Will above all wills, the Supreme Reality. The whole creed of Israel is contained in the name Jehovah; it is in effect an expansion of this word, declaring that He is, and what He is. The people of Jehovah on the world's behalf received the manifestation of the Holy One who made us; they have preserved it in the imperishable record of their Scriptures. Thus through Israel, and the book of Israel, the *Amen* of mankind answers evermore to God's self-affirming *Yea*.

Two general observations it is necessary to make upon the conception of God formed in the Old Testament and taken up by Jesus Christ:

1. That conception is intensely *personal*.

The Jewish religion ranks man as a person above the forms and forces of material nature; and God transcendently above man. Man is God's counterpart,—not sun or ocean, teeming earth or swarming beasts, but man only,

[1] The name *Yahveh* (as it was probably vocalised in Hebrew) may have had another older and pre-Mosaic etymology, designating some Semitic tribal god. But Exod. iii. 13–15 gives the word the sense and connotation which it bears henceforth in the religion of Israel. The search after any other derivation is a matter of mere philological interest.

in his integrity, forms the image and glory of God. This principle marks off the creed of Israel from that of Egypt and the nations, with their gross nature-gods. Personality it conceives to be not a limitation, but an enhancement of existence. This is in truth the form in which being distinguishes, disengages, and exalts itself. And the superiority of the personal to the impersonal, manifest in ourselves as compared with surrounding nature, holds of the divine existence absolutely. It might perhaps be safely said that personality is the distinction of God as opposed to nature; and that man is personal inasmuch as he bears the likeness of God, and lives by the breath of God's Spirit. "God is spirit," said Jesus,—is thought, will, love, purely and wholly, without qualification or defect.

The thought of Israel knew nothing of that speculative puzzle, that huge metaphysical cobweb in whose meshes so many subtle and powerful minds have been entangled, which has been spun out of the antithesis between personality and infinitude, out of the supposed logical necessity to make the absolute co-extensive and identical with the sum of existence. The being of an infinite Person was to the sane and practical faith of the prophets no contradiction, but the secret and centre of truth. God's clear and grand I AM breaks through the limitations of human reason; but it exceeds those limitations only in the sense in which all ultimate truths exceed our comprehension and escape our logical grasp, because they are the presupposition and substratum of our reason itself. Every first principle contains a paradox.

2. Being personal, the God of Christ and of the Old Testament is entirely *ethical.*

His will is the creative force of the universe, his thought the conception which gives it form and meaning. But thought and will are the expression of character. Naturalism, both in its pagan and modern scientific form, makes force, volitional or purely physical, the ruling principle of the universe, which it concentrates in its God, or gods, or system of unconscious law. Philosophy sees the divine in thought, wisdom, the idea, personal or impersonal. Buddhism resolves all into bare existence, selfless, featureless, motionless, in which being becomes indistinguishable from not-being. To Christianity God is, above all things, pure spirit—moral energy, personal life, holiness, and character.

Idolatry is the natural religion of ignorant men astray from God. It begins with the attempts of rude, primitive tribes to shape out their childish notions of the invisible powers ruling their life. In many of these endeavours we discern a true feeling after God. But there runs throughout heathenism a capital moral defect, the lack of the sense for holiness, a deadness of conscience which makes any real apprehension of the divine nature impossible. To lose sight of holiness is to miss the personal character of God; it is therefore to lose the principle both of the divine unity and the divine transcendence. The Godhead, with its ethical essence thus dropped out of our apprehensions, falls to pieces and is broken up and mingled with the manifold of nature, as in Polytheism; or it sinks down and is drowned in the universe of material or ideal finite existence, as in the various forms of Pantheism. It is holiness, or ethical infinitude (shall we say?), which constitutes the central distinction of the Godhead and gives it character, raising it immeasurably above the wild

corruption and confusion of pagan idolatry, and above the Dead Sea of pantheistic thought. Holiness charges the divine will with purpose and clothes it with authority; holiness kindles the divine thought to clear light and heat, a translucent fire shining in the inspired word, that glows with the warmth of an infinite love.

In the representation which it gives to us of God lies the eminence and glory of the Old Testament. Through "the law of Moses and the prophets and the psalms" the Son of God heard the voice and read the mind of his Father. This forms the main proof of their authenticity as a revelation; in virtue of this quality they commend themselves to every conscience of men. As Jesus Christ, to St Paul's mind, was declared to be the Son of God, so the Old Scriptures are declared to be the word of God "according to" their "spirit of holiness." With a thoroughness and consistency, a force and vividness of conviction altogether unique, the religious teachers of Israel asserted the supremacy of holiness and vindicated the ethical personality as the sovereign principle of being. Heaven and its angels the psalmist summons, and earth with all its kindreds, to worship Jehovah who is "great in Zion and high above all peoples." "Exalt ye Jehovah our God," he cries, "and worship at his holy hill." Why are all creatures challenged to this worship? why must the races and ages of mankind unite to pay homage to the Deity of an obscure and feeble tribe? The gods of Egypt or of Greece made no such vast pretensions; they advanced no jealous and exclusive claims, like this God of Israel. "For Jehovah our God is holy!" That is reason sufficient and decisive. Not force, not knowledge, not mere great-

ness and empty vastness of being will we worship, but the majesty of character, the goodness of God. Personal worth alone commands reverence, the homage of the heart. Infinite personal worth commands a boundless reverence. And our faith is that limitless power, perfect wisdom, and eternal being belong to One who is absolutely and indefectibly good—to the Holy One of Israel.[1]

And this Holy One of Israel—this "One that is good," as Jesus calls Him—Jesus teaches mankind to address as *Our Father which art in heaven.* In the murmur of a thousand languages the *Pater noster qui es in cœlis* ascends from earth to the throne of the Eternal. The revealed Lord of Israel, the unknown God after whom the nations were groping, is manifest in the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. "Father" is the name by which the Son of man, for his own part, spoke of and to God, as no human voice before—from his first words of boyhood, "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" to the last cry upon the cross, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit."

I need not repeat the familiar teachings in which the Lord Jesus has shown us of the Father. To quote these sayings and to unfold their meaning would be, in effect, to expound the greater part of his discourses. Recall only the invocation of the Lord's Prayer, and you are reminded how intimate and tender, how commanding to the heart, is the relationship in which Jesus Christ has placed us to

[1] Compare lectures iii. and iv. in the *first course* of the Boyle Lectures of Dr Wace on *Christianity and Morality.* The writer is under great obligations to this work, which vindicates the divine Personality with singular vigour and lucidity, and shows an admirable skill in the application of this supreme religious conception to the field of practical ethics.

God; and how the entire life of Christians, from childhood onwards, is coloured by it and steeped in the influence of this Fatherhood. But you will further and specially note that in its first petition the Lord's Prayer resumes the earlier manifestation of the Father's glory; it presupposes the divine holiness—that moral majesty of the Godhead, by which we know it as utterly aloof from complicity in evil or tolerance of wrong. "Our Father which art in heaven, *hallowed* be thy name": this petition subsumes the Old Testament in the New. It is a prayer for the ceasing of all idolatry and all unbelief, a prayer that every man may render in word and deed the worship due to the all-holy Father.

God is your Father: such, we have said, is the message of the Son of God and man to men. It is an easy thing to say: but the combination of these two words, the union of this subject and this predicate in human faith, is the labour of all time; it is the very task of redemption. Nothing but the person of Christ makes it conceivable that the Holy One is our Father; nothing but the cross of Christ makes it credible. It needed long ages before the word could be spoken; it appears to need long and weary ages before it can be understood. That the high and holy One who dwells in eternity is the Father of each human soul, that in all his wisdom and power He is moved by a parental compassion toward the individual man, and exercises his universal sovereignty with a watchful and affectionate regard for his offspring here on earth,—this is the news of the gospel, the mystery hidden from ages and generations, and which the wisest and most believing of us is still slow of heart to believe. Nay, if any man thinketh

that he knoweth it, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know. Behold, says the Lord Jesus to us,—to the meanest, the most ignorant who has reason and a heart,—behold, He who made heaven and earth, sea and sky and mountains, whose will holds the stars in their courses and the drops of blood circling in the channels of thy veins, the Lord of angels and countless worlds, the All-wise, the All-just, the everlasting God—I tell thee, man, He is thy Father! I know Him; I have come from his bosom. He made thee in his image,—which thou seest in Myself. He has sent Me to give thee this message, to declare his name and his mind to thee, and to bid thee be at peace with Him.

Now I ask, what is to be the ethical effect of this communication? what moral response is it calculated to evoke? what impression upon our human character does this disclosure of the divine character make, when it is apprehended? The answer is perfectly obvious, and ready upon our lips; it is "very nigh thee, in the mouth and in the heart" of those who hear me. You say, *love* is the soul's reply to the message of Christ. Believing what He declares respecting God and seeing in Him God's image, we cannot but love the Father who has sent Him. Yes, nothing is easier than to make that answer; but when you have said it, what do you mean? For to love God, if we could understand it, is the one thing needful; it is the sum of life and duty. Truly to love God is, in effect, to be everything and do everything that a man should be and do. But to *say* "I love God" may signify very little.

Our Lord Jesus, whose history is the perfect exemplification of this law, laid it down as the "first and great commandment" of his kingdom. Love to God was the

basis of the entire ethics of Jesus Christ. And if He is, as we believe, the Teacher of mankind, and knew our nature in all its conditions and workings, if He taught the way of God in truth and his word has authority for all flesh, then we must understand that love to God, and nothing else, is the foundation of the order and system of human life; it is the vital law of our being as men. We commit ourselves as Christians absolutely to this principle.

Christ draws the statement of his law from the Old Testament; for it was contained there, although not raised in the older legislation to the commanding eminence which the Master of life has given to it. He formulates it thus, replying to an earnest questioner who desired to know "what commandment is the first of all": "The first is, Hear, O Israel; The LORD our God, the LORD is one: and thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength." Observe the comprehensiveness of the principle thus stated. It covers the ethical man in his completeness. It touches every spring of thought and desire. It is to colour and suffuse, to influence, mould, and dominate the whole range and course of life. It seeks to rule the entire being of the man, by ruling his heart. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy *heart*"; and "out of the heart," as Jesus said, "are the issues of life." And "with *all* thy heart": there is to be a full and unsparing devotion of the inward being to God, a love not exclusive, but all-inclusive, such that every other affection is harmonized with it, assimilated to it, and absorbed in it. The "soul" is the "heart" in its personal constitution, its individual susceptibilities and activities; the "mind" is the

"heart" in its intellectual capacities and movements; and the "strength" of the man is the sum of his living energies.

Now is this commandment of Jesus adequate to the position which He assigns to it? We answer with entire conviction, that it is. The best and noblest of men have been those who best observed this law. Every man's affections determine, in the long run, his character. What you love is the prophecy of what you will be. As a matter of fact, there is no affection which so draws out and engages the heart, so fills and satisfies and energizes and incites to every kind of good the soul of a human being, as the love of that God and Father whom Christ revealed to us. By the vision of God in Jesus Christ the spirit is attracted to Him with a wondering awe and delight and longing, that abase and exalt it, that cleanse and illuminate it,—a state of soul in which high thought and true feeling and sure resolve are blended, while they are strengthened and refined. We are drawn by the word of Christ to the unseen, all-holy One, the centre of being, the living Father of our spirits, before whom we kneel to say, with the deepest joy that the human soul knows, "Hallowed be thy name."

In this love are gathered up all the pure emotions of older and other religions—the profound reverence, the solemnity and stillness of spirit with which the God of prophet and psalmist was worshipped; nothing of this is lost, and the Psalms of Israel are the most treasured Christian manual of devotion. Add to this the admiring worship, not unknown to the psalmists and familiar to the mind of Jesus, of him who traces the divine in the craftsmanship of nature, in the beauty and the rhythm of

universal life, and who feels the rapture of imaginative thought. Add to this also the pondering amazement of the student of history and science, as he hangs perplexed over the mysteries of this unintelligible world and the ten thousand hidden ways of Providence. Add to these still the eager activities of the practical and uncontemplative man, rejoicing in daily strength for work and sufficiency for need, and craving at each moment a lamp for his feet and a light for his laborious and often troubled path. But superadd to these various conditions of soul and kinds of adoration the personal gratitude, the delicious peace, the sense of freedom and open vision that are his who "knows the love that God hath toward us,"—then all feelings, all delights that stir the mortal frame, all thoughts, hopes, strivings toward knowledge and power, all affections to our kind, all experiences of life and death, become material for prayer and worship, and find their place under the dominion of the heart's love to God, who filleth all in all and worketh all in all.

Many moods and postures, a whole world of changing consciousness obscure or clear, now breaking into speech, now pent up in long silence or heard only in voiceless groanings and burdened sighs, belong to the converse of the soul's love with God. This love, the largest in its compass, the most decisive and most characteristic of human experiences, is not sentiment alone, not a wave of emotion, a phase of feeling sharing with many others, passing and re-passing: it is a devouring thought; it is a supreme resolution; it is the man fused into one sublime and transfiguring affection; it is the whole soul gravitating towards God.

CHAPTER II

THE FILIAL CHARACTER

Thou art no longer a slave, but a son.—St Paul

Let us glance at some of the more immediate implications and effects of love to God, at the moral qualities which this grand disposition breeds in Christian men. I wish to point out in particular four prominent features of the Christian type of character, that may be traced without difficulty to this source. They are, first, *reverence* and *loyalty*, springing from our relation to God considered by itself; and, secondly, *contentment* and *courage*, which define the attitude toward worldly good and evil of the soul abiding in God. These two pairs of virtues, you will see, are also distinguished as passive and active respectively, as restful or energetic tempers. Reverence and contentment are conspicuous in the temperament of the contemplative Christian; loyalty and courage in that of the sanguine and enterprising Christian man. In the perfect man they are equally developed and evenly balanced.

1. *Reverence* is the elementary sentiment of religion. The same disposition is called *piety*, when it comes out in acts and habits of worship. It is that "fear of Jehovah" which the Hebrew proverb calls "the beginning of wisdom."

> And I would have our days to be
> Bound each to each by natural piety.

Under the nurture of grace it is possible for the child's instinctive reverence to unfold and grow by successive transformations into the perfect filial love of God in Christ.

Reverence is the sensibility of man as a spiritual creature. He is endowed with the capacity for faith, the instinct for worship. This capacity may be stunted or diseased, like other parts of our nature; but it is inherent and congenital. We are intelligent creatures, made to know our Maker. As the magnetized needle, however hindered, quivers and trembles towards the pole, so the human spirit vibrates to the presence and the will of the Almighty. Crushed with ignorance and misery, and even steeped in sin, the soul of man out of its depths cries out for the living God. This is the sign of its grandeur, and the mark of the heights to which it may rise.

In natural reverence love to God has its subjective ground. Here is the soil where Christian faith strikes root; and the quality and savour of that soil cleave to it in all its upgrowths. Love to God is the bloom and riper fruit of piety. The freedom and confidence imparted to us by the knowledge of the divine Fatherhood should not impair but deepen, while they soften, our awe and fear of Him. A perfect reverence is the perfect blending of creaturely fear and filial love towards God.

What is revelation, after all, but the education of the soul in reverence? It is the discipline of the religious sensibilities. God has been teaching man, step by step, how to think and feel toward Himself; He is training up a Church of mankind for his worship. In heathenism we witness not the destruction, but the indefinite debasement of religion, a debasement relieved in many directions by

gleams of the true light, by purer sentiments arising here and there, and fragments of a holier creed, which go to show that God has not left Himself without witness to any. Who can read, for example, the dramas of Sophocles, that exquisite product of the Greek genius and culture at their highest point of excellence, or who can study the rude and powerful mythology of our Norse forefathers, without a new perception of the vitality and force of the religious instinct, without realising the profound connexion in which religion stands with all our nobler faculties?

In the history of the chosen people we watch the religious sense as it is supernaturally quickened, simplified and clarified, and inspired with the grand prophetic hope. Here piety becomes the nurse and guardian of ethical progress, from which in paganism it was increasingly divorced. The union of the first and second tables of the Decalogue in the hands of Moses descending from Sinai, symbolized the unity of faith and morals in the true religion. Faith stirred the sons of Israel to high imagination and moral heroism; it nourished in them the richer human affections of home and friendship and country. It produced in the elect spirits of the sacred nation a type of character, not perfect indeed after the measure of Christ, but which had no parallel elsewhere for quality and temper, for strength and keenness and various capacity. That people of the Most High has supplied the world with the chief of its religious nobility, men of the finest strain and sweetest blood, high-bred souls, the product of ages of faith and reverence—"of whom is the Christ according to flesh."

The spirit of worship becomes the spirit of life; it passes into the heart and blood, and sanctifies the spirit, soul, and

body. The reverence or irreverence that we feel towards God spreads itself over our entire existence. For God is all and in all. The tone and spirit of our Sabbath worship follow us insensibly into the business and conversation of the week. As we act and feel towards God, so we are in ourselves, so we become in and towards everything.

We by no means limit the influence of religion upon life to the avowedly religious or Christian man. The awe which the man of science feels before the august and mysterious powers of nature, the respect and self-submission of the man of conscience as he confronts the majesty of moral law, these are both of them true and noble reverences; and they unquestionably make for health and purity of soul. These feelings are a homage due to God, who may be to such men an unknown God, but is present behind the veil and living to them as to us. And He accepts from every sincere heart the worship paid to his eternal power and righteousness, though it be not consciously offered to his very Godhead. But such worship is partial and external, and so remaining is too likely to prove abortive. It does not address itself to the heart of God; it cannot carry with it the whole heart and spirit of the man. God is not force nor law alone, even the highest and grandest law: He is love; and worship, that it may be worship of Him, must be more than thoughtful admiration or submissive awe, due to his work in the universe; to these must be added the personal regard due to Himself. Men touch with reverence the border of God's garments sweeping through time and space; they tremble at his outstretched arm that writes the stern commandments and

deals out the tremendous penalties of moral law: let them look into the Father's face imaged in the Son of his love; let them see "the pitying tenderness divine," and they will know how to worship. And worship will absorb and transform their nature.

Christian reverence, we say, hallows to us everything in life. The Christian regards himself as a valued work of God. His body is a temple built through ages by the Almighty. His race is a divine offspring. He loves even in the unworthy the stamp of their Maker. Material nature, human history, daily industry, the common intercourse of life gleam for him with the veiled light and movement of the Omnipresent. Often does he start up, like Jacob from his stone-pillow at Bethel, to say, "Lo, God is in this place, and I knew it not!" I do not say that this religious habit and devout turn of mind by itself makes men ethically perfect, or even creditably moral. The instance of Jacob, and perhaps many others, would at once be cited to the contrary. Much besides of intelligence, feeling, and discipline is required to build up the perfect man. But I do say that such reverence is ethically right; that, granting the existence of the God of Christ, loving reverence to Him is the first and most constant of our duties; and its exercise puts us at the right standpoint and forms in us the right temper for the discharge of every other duty. Devoutness towards God promotes in ordinary men that calmness and elevation of mind, that relief from the bondage of the sensible world and power to rise above the pressure of the moment, that recollectedness and detachment, which are essential to the formation of a stable character, and which philosophy and poetry at

their best can but imperfectly afford to the cultured few. "God is a *refuge* for us." Many a Christian believer, like the Israelitish worshipper, might tell how he was torn with anxiety or passion, dazzled and intoxicated by temptation, wild with distracting fear and on the verge of some desperate act—"until I went into the sanctuary of God"! Prayer is the soul's retreat into the Eternal. In this fevered age we are thankful still to confess to the psalmist's God: "With Thee is the fountain of life"—oh, how cool, pure, refreshing, its draught drawn from wells of infinite, clear depth!—"in thy light we see light."

Worship is the soul's restorative. It is the medicine of anxiety and care. "They that wait upon the Lord renew their strength." Make as many exceptions as you choose, both upon the side of the unworthy prayerful and the worthy prayerless, point out and insist to the utmost upon the anomalies and hypocrisies that confuse the facts, we hold it to be true that the religious men of the community, the men accustomed to wait upon God, constitute its pith and moral strength. They have proved themselves to be so in the great crises of our English history. And we also maintain, as an historical law, that the community which ceases to worship, in whose manhood reverence becomes a discarded or diseased function, brings on itself the nemesis of moral decay and consequent effacement. It is a sound induction, however bluntly it is put in the words addressed to God in the seventy-third Psalm:

> They that are far from Thee shall perish:
> Thou hast destroyed all them that go a whoring from Thee.

Truths like these rule the centuries.

2. The spirit which is passive and contemplative in

reverence, in *loyalty* is brought into action and demonstration. Loyalty to God is the stamp which religion sets upon the conduct and enterprise of life. *Obedience* is its detailed expression, as worship is the expression and index of our reverence. This obedience, rendered by the soul to God as He is revealed in Christ, St Paul in the sixth chapter of his letter to the Romans defines as *sanctification.*

Loyalty is law-keeping. But it is law-keeping animated by personal affection. Without such affection observance of law is bare legality, subservience and not obedience. The faith of the Hebrew saints carried this principle to a noble elevation, where legal conformity was glorified by a pure delight in God the fountain of law. "Therefore," you hear them say,

> Therefore I love thy commandments
> Above gold, yea, above fine gold.
> Therefore I esteem all thy precepts concerning all things to be right;
> And I hate every false way.

In the words of the fortieth Psalm we breathe the very spirit of the Son of man possessing his forerunners, words that He made good by his great obedience, in that "act of righteousness" which "redounded unto all men for justification of life":

> Then said I, Lo, I am come;
> In the volume of the book it is written of me:
> I delight to do thy will, O my God;
> Yea, thy law is within my heart.

From this height of joyous and sympathetic, almost filial obedience, Judaism fell back into the dull taskwork of legality.

Now the personal factor is essential to the *authority*

of moral law, as distinguished from external constraint; without personal regard there is no real obedience, no service of the heart. Here lies the difference between the "righteousness of God," or "of faith," and that "righteousness of one's own" which in the New Testament is identified with "works of law" or "dead works." The faith that works by love, that sees and obeys God in his law, is the vital element in human righteousness, its savour and its kernel. The Pharisee, as Jesus told him, does not know God except by name; he cannot therefore *obey*. He sees very definitely the letter of the law, and sets himself with utmost pride and resolution to keep that; but he has no consciousness of its spirit. In order to preserve the letter and to guard himself from the least infraction, he builds around it a fence of restrictions continually growing in extent and stringency; till life is staked and mapped out over its entire surface, and duty is arranged for at every point and done by rote, and no room is left anywhere for choice and moral judgement and the impulse of the heart. In fact, the man needs a heart no longer; he has become a perfect, self-sufficient machine for working "the righteousness which is of the law." So the husk of religion thickens and hardens, as the kernel shrinks. Within that round of stereotyped rabbinical, or monastic, performance, the heart slowly rots and falls into dust; or it lives, perhaps, in smothered rebellion and stifled, fierce desire. To such a man the law of God has become an imposition from without, a dead weight, a complicated harness within which he is driven as a beast of burden by whip and reins. The ease and gladness of nature mock our "struggling, tasked morality."

Clearly this is no way of life. There is no moral worth, no living righteousness in men formed upon such a system. In many instances, we can well believe, the man was better than the system. But the outcome of legalism is seen in the Pharisees, who proved the betrayers and murderers of their expected Christ. Scrupulous men they were, down to their finger tips, exact in their ceremonies, zealots in religion, respectable to the last degree,—"as concerning zeal, persecuting the Church; touching the righteousness which is in the law blameless": so one of them describes himself,—what could one desire more? But Jesus said: "You have not the love of God in you. . . . They have both seen and hated both Me and my Father!" Their robes of righteousness, white and without spot to the eyes of men, were, as He saw them, abominable and most filthy rags,—ay, filthy, and soon to be stained with the blood of the Son of God. Finished legalism, without a spark of loyalty!

Will the righteousness evolved by modern scientific law, by the new materialistic legalism, turn out to be a better or wholesomer product? There is little reason to think so. We eagerly admit, as we have said already, that there exists in the minds of many who are averse in the present phase of thought from faith in a personal God, a sincere reverence for moral excellence and for the system of law in nature. And this reverence, so earnest and even touchingly devout, imparts to the conduct of such reverential men a warmth of feeling and nobility of purpose that put to shame many of us who hold a fuller faith. But we do not observe that this impersonal reverence continues in the disciples of such teachers. It is the inheritance of a

lapsed faith, a flower with broken stalk. Ah! in how many delicate and cultured minds in these unhappy times one may watch the glow of the setting sun of righteousness! The western sky is all flushed with the colours that the fading light shoots in vain protest through damp mists and surgent clouds. But darkness swiftly follows, darkness and sullen night. There is this melancholy charm of the sunset in much of the literature and thought of our generation, in the poetry of the modern decadence. It is not the ardour of health and hope that we feel in the creations of sceptical genius; they touch us with the sad beauty of disease, they wear the hectic hues of a fever that consumes the vitals. The man of logic and mechanical science may content himself with a universe of impersonal law. The poet sees more deeply, and he finds in it nescience and despair.

The practical, large-minded man, the constructive statesman, is equally helpless in an irreligious age. Without faith in a living God the world is inert, incapable. Society loses cohesion and buoyancy. Character fails in stamina; one misses in it that indefinable something that is as the iron in the blood. The moral law becomes like other laws, a convenient formula, a statement of the observed sequence of phenomena, without right or power to sway the heart. Coming from no will in God, it moves no will in man. The spring of human loyalty is broken.

Conscience is not sufficient for itself. It cannot explain itself; it cannot vindicate its rights nor assert its authority, without leaning back on the eternal Will behind it and submitting its judgements to the judgement of the All-wise and Righteous. "The theistic interpretation of conscience,"

as Dr Knight excellently says, "changes it from the rigid and even frigid thing which it is in many systems, from its being a cold moral imperative—as in the Stoic, and even in the Kantian Ethic—into a living commandment, emanating from an eternal source which is, at the same time, within ourselves and yet above us all."[1]

Loyalty can be felt only for a worthy person; reverence is the soul's homage to a holy will. With the ground removed on which they rest, these sentiments fade out of life; and then what is left to us? If personal being—will, righteousness, and love—ceases to rule in our system of thought, character and moral worth cease to rule in our system of action; and conduct becomes demoralised. This is a short history of multitudes of ruined lives, in which the shipwreck of faith has been followed swiftly by the shipwreck of a good conscience. Fidelity to God is the surest guard of virtue; it is the natural zest and spring of moral action.

In human communities of all kinds we find the personal factor essential to the operation of rule and law. Dignity, influence, everything that constitutes authority as distinguished from mere force and that gives weight to public proceedings, depends on the *personnel* of the ruling body, on the traditional respect which government inspires and the reverence felt for the head of the state, who impersonates the collective will and spirit of the nation. The worthiness or unworthiness of such sovereign and representative personages has an incalculable influence on the stability of civil societies. To the abstract philosopher this may seem

[1] *The Christian Ethic*, by Dr William Knight of St Andrews University, —a very able and stimulating treatment of the subject, within brief compass.

unreasonable. But the fact is patent, and it springs from the instincts and needs of our spiritual nature. "We live by admiration, hope, and love." This holds good in the factory, or in the House of Commons, as truly as it does in the domestic circle. Defective laws and weak or even corrupt administration are not fatal, while there remains enough in the people of the salt of loyalty. Disloyalty, mistrust, *unbelief*, is the one deadly disease of the body politic. It unhinges the entire social fabric. If men cannot be found worthy to rule—officers in whom their troops have confidence, magistrates whom the citizens will respect—organized human existence is at an end. The best laws without loyalty are a blank form, a dead letter. These things are a continual parable. For God is the fountain-head of authority and rule; and the moral order of every society is a mirror of our relationship to Him and a witness for his kingdom. Without God men are a shepherdless flock, and the world an orphaned house filled with strife and wailing.

Materialistic thinkers have seen clearly enough the necessity for religion as a social bond, and the impossibility of framing without faith and reverence a coherent scheme of human life. In particular, the French philosopher Auguste Comte, perhaps the greatest antichristian mind of this century, invented for this purpose a new religion. He crowned his Positive Philosophy, which is a grand generalization of the natural sciences, by the elaboration of the Positive Religion. This cultus is simply the worship of himself by man. On the throne of the Godhead is set the *grand être de l'humanité*, or collective human nature, represented by the heroes of the race who take the place

of the Catholic saints, and by woman as the more adorable form of man. Comte was consistent and profound. He perceived that a system of thought which effaces religion leaves an immense gap in human life, that must somehow be filled; the denial of God strikes out the keystone of the arch of the social construction. Secularists who appropriate the theoretical, but reject, even with contempt, the sociological and devotional part of the Positive system, close their eyes to the most signal phenomena of the human problem. Comte was right in asserting the indispensability of religion. And the impotence of his religion proves the falseness of his philosophy. To him, as to us, love is the last word of truth; it contains the end and law of intelligent being. His heart claimed a perfect love: his intellect refused God. How cruel the dilemma! He sought refuge in the worship of abstract humanity—that poor, spectral idol! Comte found the sun gone down; but there was still the moon in heaven. God, it appeared, was nothing; yet man after all is something,—and especially woman! By the borrowed rays of a humanity whose worth lies in its reflexion of the hidden God, this great man was fain to warm and kindle a soul aching with the frost of unbelief; and by such dim light he strove to mark out paths to guide his fellows through this tangled and benighted world.

The service of man without the service of God is, in truth, as moonlight unto sunlight. Our best work sinks into the drudgery of menial, overburdening toil when it lacks the Master's smile and guiding word and strong, helping hand. Religion is the soul of charity and the inspiration of labour for human good. Love to God is the fire that gives ardour and glow to all the loyalties of life. Humanitarianism

is infinitely nobler than materialism; but the humane sentiments have never originated, and will not endure without faith in a will higher and holier than the human. Our modern progress in knowledge and insight and sympathy becomes at once a retrogression, when it means our departing from the living God. As the individual withers and the spiritual life shrinks and dwindles, the world, with whatever outward gain, grows smaller, poorer, and emptier for us all.

> Bright else and fast the stream of life may roll,
> And no man may the other's hurt behold;
> Yet each will have one anguish,—his own soul,
> Which perishes of cold!

3. *Contentment* is a virtue for which our times are not propitious. It appears to be at a discount even with religious teachers. The maxim that "discontent is the soul of progress" just now finds readier hearing. But contentment holds, nevertheless, a critical position in Christian ethics, and is a direct and far-reaching deduction from the principle of love to God. We may define Christian contentment as the satisfaction of a man with the government of God. It is the attitude in which the child of God stands toward the world, the tranquil spirit in which he looks out upon it.

This virtue has an important place in the history of ethics. At the period when Christianity arose, tranquillity was the chief moral aim of thoughtful men. The pagan world was aging fast. The excitements and illusions of its passionate youth had faded. Under the repressive sway of the Macedonian and Roman empires public affairs lost their interest; life became inward, and men sought in

themselves their satisfaction. Moderate aims, subdued desires, the quiet pursuit of a tolerable individual existence, took the place of the ambitious philosophies of the great classical age of Greece. The Epicurean and Stoic teachers, whom St Paul met at Athens, divided the suffrages of students. The former sought contentment under the name of *ataraxia*, or undisturbedness; the latter aimed at *apatheia*, insensibility.

The ideal of the former school meant little more than selfish comfort; their ethics was the science of avoiding disquiet, and their philosophy a cover for their indolent retreat from the battle of life. The whole wisdom of the Epicurean lay in a good digestion, and an easy, unconcerned temper. There are many sages of that order still.

The Stoic took life more seriously, and therefore more truly. Virtue for him had intrinsic worth; it was cowardice to fly from pain, and meanness to spend life in calculating how to reduce one's discomforts to a minimum. The good man is a soldier who holds his post without thinking of wounds or weariness, and counts death better than disgrace. The Stoic moralist found the cause of our misery in our *sensitiveness*. The soul, he preached, must suppress its emotions and steel itself against pain and pleasure. Cased in the proof armour of insensibility, the wise man meets the buffetings of life with firm front. He stands "unshaken, unseduced, unterrified" amidst the threats or enticements that enslave the multitude. He is self-controlled, self-contained, self-sufficient, equal to the gods. Viewed on its best side, Stoicism wears the air of manly independence; it bears itself with the

dignity of grave and conscious virtue. On the other hand, its professed victory over the world was forced and unreal; its conquest over the passions, where actually gained, was a triumph of repression, not of transformation. The affections were destroyed, when they needed to be purified. This cold philosophy froze the currents of the heart, instead of making for them orderly and healthful channels. It produced a type of character brave, proud, austere, but harsh and impracticable, often positively inhuman. It knew no God distinct from nature, or the universal reason and law of things. Stoicism can never, under any circumstances, be fashioned into a popular religion; but its creed was embraced with earnestness by a succession of high-minded and distinguished men, and it has affected widely and permanently the thought of after times.

St Paul's temperament and circumstances brought him into contact at several points with the Stoical system. He was acquainted with its tenets; some of its most eminent exponents were Cilicians, his fellow countrymen. "Contentment" was a term under which he was accustomed to describe, not indeed the end of life, but its prevailing temper. The word he uses is, literally, "self-sufficiency," a term adopted from the philosophers,—as when he writes of himself, "I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therein to be content (self-sufficient)"—a profession which Zeno or Seneca would have cordially admired. This was the lesson that the Stoics were always studying. Again, he says to Timothy concerning riches: "Godliness with contentment (with self-sufficiency) is great gain. . . . Having food and raiment, we shall be therewith content," (a text which might be preached to our commercial classes every

Sunday!) The apostle has the same word on his pen when he writes to the Corinthians, that "God is able to make all grace abound towards you, that ye having all *sufficiency* in all things, may abound unto every good work."

In the Pauline as in the Stoic dialect, "contentment" is the sufficiency of the "good man satisfied from himself" and indifferent to the more or less of outward goods. But the two tempers of mind are profoundly different in their nature and their source. The Christian self-sufficiency is relative; it is an independence of the world through dependence upon God. The Stoic self-sufficiency pretends to be absolute. The one is the contentment of faith, the other of pride. Cato and Paul both stand erect and fearless before a persecuting world: one with a look of rigid and defiant scorn; the other with a face now lighted up with unutterable joy in God, now cast down with sorrow and wet with tears for God's enemies. The Christian martyr and the Stoic suicide are the final examples of these two memorable and contemporaneous protests against the evils of the world.

There is a gentler Stoicism of our own times, practised by those who, renouncing the consolations of the Christian faith, seek refuge from the human world in the calm and grandeur of the external universe. The poetry of Matthew Arnold has given a powerful and significant expression to this frame of mind.

> Weary of myself, and sick of asking
> What I am, and what I ought to be,

I ask the poet for solace, and he bids me turn from the inward tumult and sickness to the vast, enduring stillnesses

of nature. He takes me out into the night and by the sea-shore:

> From the intense, clear, star-sown vault of heaven,
> Over the lit sea's unquiet way,
> In the rustling night-air came the answer:
> "Wouldst thou *be* as these are? *Live* as they.
>
> "Unaffrighted by the silence round them,
> Undistracted by the sights they see,
> These demand not that the things without them
> Yield them love, amusement, sympathy."[1]

This is the sum of what naturalistic poetry has to say to the heart that hungers for God. To such advisers—poets or philosophers—true sorrow will say, like Job to his friends, "Miserable comforters are ye all!"

The new Stoicism is much more graceful, but not in reality more satisfying than the old. This balm of nature soothes for a moment, but cannot heal the malady of self. It is an anodyne, no remedy. We are not stars, and cannot "live as they," without love and sympathy. And the quiet of the stars, alas! that too, science tells us, is an illusion of distance, like the impassiveness of some heroic man, hiding fiery tumult and wild elemental strife. In effect, the Nirvana of Eastern quietism, the extinction of self-hood and cessation of being, is the only goal of such aspirations,—sheer death in place of life. This affectation of philosophic calm in regard to the questions of God and the soul is a mere playing at Buddhism. The poet despairs of redemption; he falls back into the Stoic apathy and aims at the extirpation of feeling,—which means the destruction of poetry first of all!

We find heart-rest nowhere but in the fatherhood of

[1] "Self-dependence," p. 255, *Poetical Works of Matthew Arnold* (1890).

God; not in the suppression of our personality, but in its attachment to the perfect and universal Personality. Such love is trust; and trust is peace. There is nothing so simple to the experienced believer as this secret, nothing so unaccountable and unattainable to the man who knows not God.

Our blessed Lord taught contentment to his disciples, and gave us its example in Himself, deriving it from his dependence on the fatherly providence of God. He did not ignore the questions, "What shall we eat and drink?" and, "Wherewithal shall we be clothed?" nor persuade men that "these things" which "the nations of the world seek after" are undesirable. On the other hand, He maintained the duties and the rights of labour and the honourable use of worldly goods. "Your heavenly Father," He assures us, "knoweth that ye have need of these things." And it is just for this reason, because there is a heavenly Father who knows and cares, that Christ forbids us to be anxious. In his doctrine, it is filial love to this Father and devotion to his kingdom and righteousness which keep the things of bodily need to their rightful, subordinate place. He makes us apprehend that "the life is more than meat and the body than raiment."

Jesus Christ never denied nor palliated the injustices of secular life, the crying contradiction that exists between merit and reward, between conduct and happiness in this world. He showed neither grief nor irritation at his own poverty and dependence. He would have his disciples content that God's rain should fall with equal bounty on the just and unjust, content that wheat and tares should grow together in God's fields—until the harvest. He was

no hasty, desperate reformer, maddened by intolerable wrong. In terrible words He denounced social oppression and robbery. But He was utterly removed from the base envy and grudging of the discontented poor, as He was from the odious condescension of the worldly-minded rich, who value "worth" by pecuniary income and regard persons of narrow means as placed beneath them. Jesus Christ had no scheme and no promise of the removal of poverty, while the world should stand. He chose this for his personal lot, and made it honourable and happy for his people. To poverty He has given something better than pity. He gave his own company—a noble and even gay comradeship in the shifts and discomforts of a straitened life. How many a homeless, weary man has been cheered to find the Son of man travelling by his side and to hear Him say, "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head"!

When the great commandment of the Lord Jesus is our inward law, and "whether we eat or drink, or whatever we do," all is done to the glory of God, we attain our moral equilibrium, that harmony and poise of spirit, soul, and body, that spiritual-mindedness which is health and peace. We enter into the peace that "passes reason," the ordered tranquillity of the kingdom of God, the restfulness of the shadow of the Almighty. "Thou hast made us for Thyself, O Lord; and our heart is restless till it rests again in Thee." So writes the great Augustine in the beginning of his *Confessions*, and whoever knows this truth has set his foot upon the way of contentment and peace. Though "having nothing," the Christian "possesses all things."—Surely God is enough for any man.

4. Christian *courage* is the active, as contentment is the passive manifestation of the soul's confidence in God before the world. It is love resistant, contentious on behalf of the Beloved. Without the infusion of this brave and zealous spirit, contentment sinks into a spiritual luxury, and peace with God becomes the corrupt peace of indolence. The Christian life is war as truly as it is peace. "I came on earth," said the Lord Jesus, "to send a sword."

The religion of Jesus Christ is a militant religion, like Muhammadanism that followed. It also has the world to conquer, only with different weapons. Christianity is an enterprise as well as an experience, a mission and a voyage, not a harbour of repose. It has a truth to proclaim and enforce; it has an immense reconstructive work to do. The formidable nature of this task our Lord never concealed from his disciples. To declare the Father's name cost Him the cross; and it would cost them a corresponding price. He cultivated in them by every possible means a hardy and daring temper. He showed in his own bearing an utter fearlessness of human power and complete self-possession in the face of danger. But observe the ground of his exhortations on this head: "Fear not, little flock; it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.—Fear not them which kill the body: but fear only Him.—No sparrow falls to the ground without your Father. As for you, the very hairs of your head are all numbered.—Let not your heart be troubled: believe in God, believe also in Me."

These encouragements belong to the marrow of the gospel. They have made it a creative force in the world.

They formed the spirit of the apostles and martyrs. The good soldiers of Christ Jesus have gone forward in the pathway of the cross, not men alone, but shrinking women and tender children, measuring the powers arrayed against them, yet no whit dismayed; forward to exile and prison and torture, forward to death and to shame worse than death,—marching all of them under an almighty shield and to certain triumph. It was the love of Jesus,—yes, and it was the knowledge of the Father, that gave this matchless courage and unquenchable ardour to the Christians of the first ages. "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." And if anywhere the war flags and victory seems unsure, it is because the courage of a clear faith in God is wanting to us.

No one has exhibited this active principle of Christianity more powerfully than the apostle Paul. The sense of God's love in Christ inspired him with an invincible spiritual might. "We were bold in our God," he writes of his entrance into Thessalonica, "to speak unto you the gospel of God in much conflict." This is the note of his entire ministry, heard through all his tale of suffering and confessions of infirmity. His enthusiastic temperament and natural courage lent themselves to this development of character in St Paul; but its inner spring and vigour lay in his conviction of God's personal grace to himself, and of the mission which that grace had laid upon him. There is in the apostle none of the turbulence of the fanatic, none of the unfeeling hardihood of the Stoic. He is the most sane and clear-sighted, and the most sensitive of men. But there is an indomitable will, an unwearied energy of mind and body, untamed by suffering and

undisturbed by threatening, a buoyancy and elasticity of spirit, a high-hearted and whole-hearted confidence in his Master's cause with the world in arms against it, that in their combination form the most effective order of courage which human nature has attained. To the tenacity, the intrepid steadfastness of the Old Testament saints who endured as seeing Him that is invisible, there is added in the Christian hero the warmth of heart, the missionary ardour and aggressiveness of a universal love. The world knew and valued courage,—the first of the virtues in its moral theories, and that which gave its name to "virtue." In the early struggles for existence manly courage was the prime condition of social vitality, the quality on which the persistence of the surviving races primarily depended. Many a brave man had lived and died for honour and for country before the age of Jesus and of Paul. But here was a new and strange type of bravery, plying weapons "not carnal, but mighty through God," clad in a panoply against which all the arms of the world would be tried in vain. The heroism of the soldier is to be eclipsed by that of the martyr; and the cross of Jesus will one day float, a victorious ensign, over the legions of Rome.

St Paul's was a confidence which had behind it the purpose and strength of almighty love. Such a faith raises the temperature of the heart, quickens the vital forces, and generates moral energy in all directions. The decline of faith in the supernatural, observed in our days in so many quarters, has for its psychological result the growth of pessimism, the decay of the power to hope and to resolve; and there rises the ominous question, freely dis-

cussed in current literature and accentuated by multiplying suicides, "Is life worth living?" Well, it is a natural and inevitable question, if life as we see it, mere phenomenal existence, is all,—if we are to walk by sight without faith. Pessimism is the nemesis of unbelief. It is the index of the lowered vitality of society losing its religion. The strain of modern civilised existence aggravates our need of faith in God; it increases the demand for the moral stamina that the true religion supplies.

It would be worth enquiring how far the energy of Christian peoples, their tenacity and racial persistence under hostile conditions (witnessed, for example, in the old Christian communities within the Turkish empire)—how far this vitality, and their superiority in every form of industrial enterprise, may be traced to the influence of their religion operative through generations, "breathing household laws" and forming social aptitudes and potencies in the blood. In our own history, the spirit that conquered at Trafalgar and beat down the empire of Napoleon was the legacy of Puritan forefathers. The Methodist revival, by its ethical influence, saved the British empire from the convulsions of the French Revolution. When "England expects every man to do his duty," it is because Englishmen have learned duty from their Bible; and duty has gained its awful sovereignty in hearts nourished in the fear and love of God.

Sir John Eliot, the heroic Parliamentary leader of the reign of Charles I., who died in the Tower of London a martyr to the cause of English liberties, writes thus to his friend John Hampden, a few months before his end, when he was a broken, helpless man, sickening for the grave.

The letter is dated March 29, 1632; it is the last that has been preserved from Eliot's hands:

> Oh the infinite mercy of our Master! Dear friend, how it abounds in us that are unworthy of his service! How broken, how perverse and crooked are our ways in obedience to Him! How exactly straight is the line of his providence unto us, drawn out through all occurrents and particulars to the whole length and measure of our time! . . . What can we render? . . . We have nothing but ourselves, who are unworthy above all; and yet that, as all other things, is his. For us to offer up that is but to give Him of his own, and that in far worse condition than we at first received it; yet this, so infinite is his goodness for the merits of his Son, He is contented to accept. This, dear friend, must be the comfort of his children; this is the physic we must use in all our sickness and extremities; this is the strengthening of the weak, the enriching of the poor, the liberty of the captive, the health of the diseased, the life of those that die, the death of that wretched life of sin! And this happiness have his saints! . . . Friends should communicate their joys; this as the greatest, therefore, I could not but impart unto my friend.[1]

That letter is a document as significant as it is pathetic. It supplies a key to some of the deepest movements of modern times. It reveals the spirit of the two men who, more than any others, saved England from the Stuart tyranny and determined the course of our national history in the tremendous crisis of the seventeenth century. "Happy is the people that is in such a case,"—that finds men of this lofty temper, with a faith in God so tender, firm, and humble, to be their public leaders! And the succession of God-fearing statesmen has not failed us.

Belief in God the Father is a moral principle that operates both negatively and positively; it restrains evil and inflicts fear of wrong-doing, while it furnishes the

[1] The letter is quoted at length in vol. vii. of Gardiner's *History of England from* 1603–1642 A.D., which gives an impressive portraiture of this first of the great Parliamentarians.

strongest impulse to well-doing for multitudes of men. There is no principle available to replace it, either as incentive or as check. The Israelite Joseph meets the enticement of pleasure and the terror of power with the question, "How can I do this great wickedness, and *sin against God?*" Has any theorist formulated a working sanction for morality that is half so prompt and effective, and so apt to the nature of the human mind, as this? With the fear of the Lord removed from the eyes of passionate and tempted men, this and the like great wickedness finds, ah, how often! the door of the soul unguarded and the one insuperable obstacle taken from its pathway. To be sure, morality has its natural reasons, and cleanly habit and self-respect may, under ordinary circumstances, keep ordinary men walking in the beaten track. But circumstances are not always ordinary and calculable. There needs to be this ulterior reason in reserve, this fear of the divine judgement lodged in the breast, a fear which is reverence before the omniscient Father more than dread of his chastening hand. Unspeakable is his peril who in the battle of life hears no rallying voice from the unseen, who knows no Presence that beholds in secret, who has no resource of prayer in "the hour and power of darkness," who must meet alone those assaults of blinding and bewildering temptation which befall at some time or other almost every living man. "Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help"; safe is he who can confidently say, "As for me, I will call upon God; and Jehovah shall save me."

While belief in the Father Almighty protects us from the worst in ourselves and supplies arms and courage for

inward victory, it is at the same time a strong bridle to restrain the excesses of external violence. St Paul applied this motive with the utmost vigour to regulate the conduct of master and slave towards each other. The latter he inspires with loyalty, cheerfulness, and self-respect; on the former he imposes heedfulness and self-restraint, as he teaches them that both have a "Master in heaven" with whom is "no respect of persons," that each will "receive back the good that he did" or "the wrong that he did, whether bond or free." No more salutary social lesson could be preached in that or any age; and on no other principles than those of Paul could this lesson be preached with equal power.

In his *Instans Tyrannus*, Robert Browning vividly seizes this effect, and describes the curb that religion puts on the insolence of power, in language unsurpassed for sublimity since the Hebrew psalmists.. The autocrat is using his enginery of state to crush one single man hateful to him, who had escaped by his insignificance,—a squatting toad, a slinking rat. The moment comes when his prey is trapped Hear Browning's words:

> So, I soberly laid my last plan
> To extinguish the man.
> Round his creep-hole, with never a break
> Ran my fires for his sake;
> Overhead, did my thunder combine
> With my underground mine:
> Till I looked from my labour content
> To enjoy the event.
>
> When sudden . . . how think ye, the end?
> Did I say "without friend"?
> Say rather, from marge to blue marge
> The whole sky grew his targe

> With the sun's self for visible boss,
> While an Arm ran across
> Which the earth heaved beneath like a breast
> Where the wretch was safe prest!
> Do you see? Just my vengeance complete,
> The man sprang to his feet,
> Stood erect, caught at God's skirts, and prayed!
> —So, *I* was afraid!

Who that has read history and discerned the possibilities of evil in a highly developed civilisation but shudders to think of a time coming when all fear of God should be taken from the evil, and all trust in Him from the good? Who does not tremble to imagine that shield of the Almighty thrown over the despised and friendless being once destroyed? What is there left, when this is gone, to break the force of man's tyranny over man? To suppose that democracy will abolish despotism is the idlest of illusions. The rule of the many instead of the few changes the form and incidence of oppression; that is all. It has never reduced either the violence or injustice that cleaves to godless power. The great heart of the people, left to itself, is no more wise or dispassionate than the small heart of the single tyrant. Socrates was sentenced to the hemlock cup, and Jesus to the cross, by the voice of the multitude. "They cried out all together (the chief priests and rulers and the people), Away with this man, and release unto us Barabbas"![1]—"They knew not what they did"; yes, and the people will always know not what they do, till they are taught of God. The masses may understand their immediate secular interests and needs better than any ruling order; but to impute to them more justice and charity, apart from the spirit of religion, to suppose that aggregation

[1] Luke xxiii. 13–25.

of numbers is a guarantee against the deceptions of sophistry and passion in individuals, is a notion that, with every wish to think otherwise, one must pronounce gratuitous and historically false. Some deceptions are neutralised by combining many voices in one judgement; others are multiplied and deepened. It is a mere superstition that sees in the progress of popular power a compensation for the decreasing influence of religion. On the other hand, this progress supplies an additional and urgent motive for the revival of religion in our days.

The English populace is gathering incalculable forces into its hand. It holds threads that move nigh half the world. Will our people have insight, courage, self-denial, and self-control for their destiny, for the immense and momentous tasks lying before them in the future? Will England show a mind that can rise above her commerce and her hire? Or is she to be a bound Samson grinding in the mills of Mammon?—or as her poet of little faith beheld her:

> The weary Titan, with deaf
> Ears, and labour-dimmed eyes,
> Regarding neither to right
> Nor left, goes passively by,
> Staggering on to her goal;
> Bearing on shoulders immense,
> Atlantean, the load,
> Well-nigh not to be borne,
> Of the too vast orb of her fate?[1]

Is this to prove a true forecast of our national future? Her strength for her world-burden is the proved, immortal might of faith in the God of our fathers, the strength of obedience to his unshaken rule who is the Father of the

[1] In lines written at "Heine's Grave," by Matthew Arnold.

peoples and Judge of the whole earth. Woe unto us if we forsake the Rock of our salvation! For the modern world no choice will be left but God or anarchy,—Christendom or the abyss! Our European civilisation and society are doomed to perish in a confusion to which the worst ages of the past will scarcely supply a parallel, if the faith of Jesus Christ, on which their pillars rest, decays from under us. But there are many signs to show that this ruin shall not be. Courage, freedom, hope, and unfailing vigour will be ours, while in all lands English tongues repeat, from loyal English hearts, "I believe in God the Father Almighty."

Jesus Christ has said many bold things. But perhaps the boldest of all is that saying of the Sermon on the Mount: "Ye shall be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect." Plato, the divinest of philosophers, had a vision of this goal. He conceived that the goodness and wisdom proper to man are hidden in the divine nature, and must be gained by contemplation and union with the Godhead. But the Platonic ideal remained a speculation, distant and dim, and intellectually cold, until Christ gave it warmth and colour, breadth and substance, the movement and energy of an omnipresent Life and Love. His revelation has translated the cloudy ideal of abstract thought into the sublime, affectionate, and realistic image of "our Father in heaven."

The Christian life must be made in a vivid and practical sense, *an imitation of God.* The sons are called to reproduce the Father's image. The finite, within its limits, may be perfect as the infinite. There is a correspondence of nature

between God and men. Goodness, holiness means the same in both. Morality is a common function of personal beings. We are bidden to "love the Lord our God with all our mind and strength": can God Himself do more than love with all *his* mind and strength?

The maxim of Jesus concerning human perfection is finely applied by St Paul, when, contemplating with his readers the great act of divine forgiveness, he directs them to be "imitators of God, as beloved children."[1] The character of God the Father, revealed to us in the gospel, is thus made the detailed pattern and guiding rule of the conduct of each believer. No words can express the grandeur of the Christian aim. It is a most daring mark, an ideal infinitely glorious and exalted, that we set ourselves to seek when we accept the gospel of Christ; but He has made the ideal feasible,—and He has made it imperative! In thought and faith our divine Master lifts us with Himself to the height of his transcendent purpose. We are to be godly, *God-like* men. "I will be to you a Father, and ye shall be to Me sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty."

[1] Eph. iv. 31 to v. 2.

CHAPTER III

THE INCARNATION OF THE SON OF GOD

Who is the image of God the invisible, firstborn over all creation.
—St Paul

Our Lord Jesus Christ revealed God to us under the name of Father. But in the course of his teaching it came out that there was a twofold meaning in this designation as He employed it, and that He regarded God as being his own Father in a sense altogether unique and transcendent. "When ye pray say, Our Father which art in heaven"; so He has taught us to pray amongst each other. But in all the confidence and closeness of his brotherhood with men, He never speaks of God to them in this form. Not once by any chance does He say, "Our Father," including Himself in the pronoun. When He sends to us the news of his rising from the dead, it is in the words, "Go unto my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and unto my God and your God." The inmost consciousness of Jesus speaks in this distinction,—a distinction which the most ingenious exegesis cannot eliminate, and which has wrought itself into the entire texture of the gospel tradition and the entire fabric of the Christian faith.

The divine self-consciousness of the Lord Jesus has left its stamp deeply marked upon the great intercessory prayer

for his disciples, to which we have already alluded. He presents Himself before the Father as "the Son"; He declares, "All things that are mine are thine, and thine are mine"; He claims to have alone "known" the Father and to have been "sent" by the Father "into the world," as no other son of man had been. He asserts the mutual indwelling of the Father and Himself, and makes this the basis of a common indwelling of the Church in both. He remembers the love wherewith the Father loved Him "before the foundation of the world," and looks forward to his restoration to "the glory" which He had by the Father's side "before the world was." He associates Himself with "the only true God" as the object of that knowledge which is "life eternal." The tone and tenor of the prayer are throughout in keeping with these unparalleled assumptions: "I ask,"[1] He says,—"Father, I will," as one who speaks, though with the deepest submission, to an equal, and who feels that his word is decisive, that it is enough for Him to explain his wishes. No sane and reverent man, who was but man, ever prayed like this. Nor could any follower of Jesus, least of all a monotheistic Jew, have dared to conceive an act of intercession for his Master of this extraordinary character and to put it into his lips, if it had not been uttered. The Intercessor pleads as the Only-begotten of the Father, the Son of God conscious of his Godhead, who is now returning to the Father who sent Him, and commends to the Father the men whom He has made his brethren upon earth.

[1] The word "pray" in John xvii. 9, 20 is ἐρωτῶ, *I ask*. "This use of *ask* in connexion with prayer addressed to God is peculiar to St John. It expresses a request made on the basis of fellowship, and is used in the Gospel only of the petitions of the Lord" (Westcott on John xvi. 26).

As we know well, the sense of his kinship to God that comes out so strongly here is nothing new in the history of Jesus Christ. This consciousness underlies everything that the Christ of the fourth Gospel says and does; and it betrays itself repeatedly, and sometimes with equal decisiveness, in the records of the other three. This was the ground, finally, of the sentence pronounced upon Him by the Jewish Sanhedrin; He was condemned to death for blasphemy, meeting with an affirmative the solemn question of the high priest, "Art Thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?" The second predicate in that question was not a mere synonym of the first and limited by it; it was a climax rising above it.

The Lord Jesus, we observe, did not formally teach his divine Sonship, nor make its revelation the object of his mission. "Glorify thy Son," He prays to the Father, "that the Son may glorify Thee." He sought the glory of the Father who sent Him, and left his name in the Father's hands. This is a truth *overheard*, as some one says, rather than directly heard from his lips. Its affirmation became necessary when and so far as the authenticity of his message was questioned, when men began to ask who He was and whence He came who exercised such authority. Unbelief compelled the meek and lowly One to words and deeds of sublime self-assertion. His superhuman authority made itself first felt, and most sharply felt, by those who were most opposed to it,—by the demons who cried out, "We know Thee who Thou art!" and by the keen, proud Jewish doctors who exclaimed, "He makes Himself equal with God!" The disciples, who yielded unquestioningly to his influence and occupied themselves with the contents

rather than the credentials of their Master's teaching, were slow to perceive what these incidents implied. The Pharisees and scribes appear to have seen farther into the mind of Christ upon this point during his earthly ministry than did his trusting followers. Jealousy and hate are more quick-sighted in some things than love. The conceptions which the apostles formed of the divinity of their Lord, taking shape within their minds gradually but surely, appear to be derived from that which they saw of his communion with God, from such revelations as that recorded in the seventeenth chapter of St John's Gospel, from the manner in which He wrought his miracles, from his singular tone of authority and knowledge of the human heart, above all, from the superhuman holiness that shone out at every point of his character, rather than from any direct self-disclosures of Jesus or formal inculcations of this amazing truth. Had they apprehended it distinctly at an early time, their intercourse with Him would necessarily have become constrained. This was one reason why it was "expedient" for them that He should "go away." As He was "parted from them and carried up into heaven," his disciples "worshipped Him." Continuous worship of a visible God is impossible on earth. By degrees it dawned upon the Twelve that the familiar Son of man, who was amongst them as one that serveth, was more than man, that He called Himself "Son of man" in the consciousness of another pre-existent and infinitely higher Sonship. The confession made after his resurrection by Thomas, the most hesitating and sceptical mind among the Twelve, was the final point reached on their part by a long course of education and reflexion upon the relation held

by their Master to God his Father. The slow, experimental process by which men learnt the Godhead of Jesus Christ was a sure process. It is a fact that, by dint of its actuality and constant pressure on the mind of the first disciples, and on the mind of the ages through their witness, has established itself amongst the enduring beliefs of mankind.

The Lord Jesus, it appears then, disclosed Himself as the eternal Son of the divine Father in the act of revealing the Fatherhood of God. The latter revelation involved the former both practically and theoretically, and could not in reality be made without it. Jesus said to his disciples on a memorable occasion: "All things have been delivered unto Me of my Father: and no one knoweth the Son, save the Father; neither doth any one know the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal Him."[1] God is known to men adequately only through his perfect image. And Christ is God's perfect image, as only a son of the same nature can be the image of his father. It is to this conclusion that the apostle John brings us in the prologue to his Gospel: "God no one hath seen at any time; an only begotten God,[2] who is in the bosom of the Father, He set Him forth." When one of Christ's disciples therefore appealed to Him at the last supper, "Lord, shew us the Father," He replied: "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known Me, Philip? *He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father;* and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father?" Philip ought by this time to have known better. A right understanding of God the Father is included in the right understanding of Jesus Christ his Son, and *vice versâ*.

[1] Matt. xi. 27. [2] John i. 18: R.V. *margin*.

As Christ puts it, we cannot believe in the Father, except as we know and believe in Himself the Son. This humble Jesus declares that the almighty Father has given Him "all authority in heaven and on earth," and has put "all judgement" into his hands, as "the Son." He convicts his Jewish opponents of having no real knowledge of God or obedience to Him, from the simple fact that they "dishonour" Himself who was "come from God." He anticipates for Himself a worship coextensive with that of the Father and inseparable from it, and puts Himself by the side of the "only true God" as the object of that knowledge which constitutes the life eternal. St John therefore echoes without exaggeration his Master's teaching when he writes in his epistle: "Every one that denieth the Son hath not the Father either: he that confesseth the Son holdeth also the Father."[1] Clearly then the recognition of Himself as the Son of God was, in the view of Jesus Christ, designed to form a chief element of the religion of his disciples. Faith in his Godhead has impressed a distinctive stamp on Christian feeling and behaviour.

But there is, to the mind of Jesus Christ, along with the distinction a profound and intimate connexion between the Sonship He possesses and that which He confers on men, a strict dependence of the latter on the former. The human filiation is grounded in the divine. This is evident when He speaks of "my Father and your Father," or says that "the Son shall make you free"—you slaves of sin—He who "abideth in the house for ever."[2] To St Paul the community of sonship between Christ and believing man was a fundamental article of faith. The whole work

[1] 1 John ii. 23. [2] John viii. 31–36.

of human redemption, in this apostle's view, from its conception in eternity had for its end to "conform" us "to the image of God's Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren"; and the Holy Spirit, who witnesses our adoption as sons of God, is "sent forth in our hearts" in the character of "the Spirit of God's Son."[1] Had not Christ appeared as the very Son, the eternal Son, the Fatherhood of God toward us would have seemed to be a figure of speech, a condescending analogy; but now we perceive that it is intrinsic and fundamental, that Fatherhood is of the essence of God, that it is no new relationship extemporised, as one might say, for our benefit and by way of accommodation to human sentiment; it is founded in the being of the Almighty, and our sonship springs from the bosom of an eternal Father: "That the love wherewith Thou lovedst Me may be in them," prayed Jesus, "and I in them." Finite as we are to the last degree, and our individual life a fugitive moment, a scarcely visible point in the towering magnitudes and the sweeping march of universal existence, yet by faith in "the Son of God who loved me and gave Himself up for me," I touch his infinitude, I have an individual and indefeasible part in his Sonship. He is the Son of God: I am a son of God. We "become thus partakers of a divine nature"; and it is by faith in this truth that we "escape the corruption that is in the world through lust."

But this faith in the Son of God, who makes us free sons within his Father's house, throws us back upon an earlier truth. "In the beginning," when the material heavens and earth had been created, "God said, Let Us make man in our image, after our likeness!" And now, after long

[1] Rom. viii. 28–30; Gal. iv. 1–7; Eph. i. 5.

ages, when the divine image in humanity had been defaced, crushed out of shape and soiled with unspeakable vileness, lo! there cometh One, a perfect and all-kingly Man, who is proclaimed by God's voice speaking again as at creation, "My beloved Son, in whom I was well pleased." This saying is retrospective. It looks backward from time into eternity, as do all God's thoughts concerning Christ, to the primal relations of the Son to the Father and to humanity. He who is the "image of God" essentially, eternally, is He not that image of God wherein we were made,—the very mould in which our human nature has been cast? He declares Himself in the Apocalypse of St John to be "the *root* and the offspring of David";[1] and if so, then He is the root as well as the offspring of humanity. This underlying thought, as we conceive, was in the mind of the apostle Paul when he wrote to the Colossians and Ephesians, identifying "the new man created in Christ Jesus" with the "image" in which man was at first "created after God." There is a profound alliance, reaching down to the foundations of the world, between our humanity and the Son of God who came to redeem it. The "second man from heaven" is second in the order of time, but first in the ideal and eternal order. Christ, and not Adam, is our spiritual protoplast. He "came unto his own,"—came to a people kindred with Himself, though bitterly estranged; He "came to seek and to save that which was lost," the human world that belonged to Him, and was from the beginning as a part of Himself. It was all "created in Him, and for Him,"[2] declares St Paul.

"The New Testament," said Augustine, "is latent in the

[1] Rev. xxii. 16; comp. John i. 15, 16. [2] Col. i. 16, 17.

Old; the Old is patent in the New,"—a luminous maxim which covers the entire development of revelation. The mystery of the Incarnation lay hidden in the world's beginning. Redemption is creation reasserted and carried forward to its goal. The relationship of mankind to the Son of God, now realised in the Church of the redeemed, is fundamental to human existence and lies at the basis of history. Hence in the epistle to the Ephesians, when writing upon marriage, the most vital and ancient of human institutions, St Paul finds its pattern and original in the union of the Christ and the Church. According to the thought of God, the second of these two relations is prior to the first; and in this fact lies the sanctity and mystery of wedlock. When throughout Scripture Israel, or the Church, is called the bride of the Lord and religious apostasy is denounced as "whoredom," this is no figure of speech or rhetorical exuberance; for the union of man and wife, by which the life of the race continues, rests upon and corresponds to the spiritual union of the Son of God with mankind, in which our eternal life consists. The natural and the spiritual marriage, according to the apostle's interpretation, are alike a reunion of sundered elements needed to make a complete whole. The Christ nourishes and cherishes the Church, the apostle says, "because we are members of his body."[1] So that, as it appears, Christ the Head is dismembered without his Church, and the Son of God is scarcely Himself without his "many brethren."

While the Father could not but seek his alienated offspring and "in love foreordained us to filial adoption through Jesus Christ unto Himself," it was equally needful

[1] Eph. v. 28–33, R.V.

for the Son of his love to recover "his own in the world," and to restamp and restore in its true lineaments his image in those who were destined to bear it. Well did Tertullian cry, "O testimonium animæ naturaliter Christianæ!" We are Christian by the make and constitution of our being. With the relation of God to the world there is bound up essentially and inseparably that of Christ to mankind. His humanity appears to be involved in the plan of the universe, in the scheme and nature of things, so far as from the Christian standpoint we are allowed to look into that. It is not enough for Christ to stand alone in his supreme and unapproachable Sonship as the only begotten God: fain would He be the "firstborn among many brethren," and gather to Himself all that the Father had given Him. Therefore He becomes, to quote St Paul's language again, "firstborn of all creation,"—ay, and "firstborn out of the dead"! We believe that the Christ whom God "has given to the Church, which is his body," is from the beginning "Head over all things," and that the entire life of mankind, natural and spiritual, is grounded in Him and owes allegiance to Him. The incarnation of the Son of God, underneath its lowly guise, is the assumption upon his part of this universal lordship, which extends backward to the creation and forward to the last judgement and the world's end. St Paul and St John alike felt that they could interpret his authority in no narrower or lower sense. So we sing over the cradle at Bethlehem:

> Welcome all wonders in one sight!
> Eternity shut in a span!
> Summer in winter: day in night!
> Heaven in earth, and God in man!
> Great Little One, whose all-embracing birth
> Lifts earth to heaven, stoops heaven to earth!

Having thus stated the doctrine of Christ's incarnate lordship, we come to ask, What are its ethical implications? They are far-reaching as the principle on which they are based, and amount to a veritable transformation of human character. There is no element in our moral life which this doctrine of the Person of Christ does not affect. We have described Christianity as the religion of the divine Fatherhood; it may be defined with equal truth and completeness as *the religion of the Incarnation.* All branches of Christian conduct might be discussed under the category of the ethics of the Incarnation. Let us at least attempt to survey the more salient aspects under which the coming of the Son of God in our flesh reveals human life to us, and to distinguish the new elements which it infuses into our conceptions of duty and virtue.

The main inference to be drawn from the fact of the Deity of Jesus Christ is that of the immense worth and capacity of human nature. From the truth of the Fatherhood of God we deduced the duty of love to God: from the truth of the Incarnation of the Son of God we infer *the duty of faith in man.* All the regenerating influences and quickening thoughts which are born in the souls of men through the birth of Jesus Christ in Bethlehem, appear to us to centre at this point.

How gloriously capable a nature is that in which the Son of God the eternal found room, and for ever will find room to dwell! True, "He emptied Himself"; but He did not annihilate Himself, nor compromise his Godhead by making Himself man. He was still and always, uninterruptedly, the Son of God, though veiled in flesh and humbled unto death. And we are told that there now

"dwells in Him all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." Yes, the unlimited power, wisdom, glory of the very God reside in the man Christ Jesus,—in one who wears a bodily form derived from a human mother! He makes that form the vessel of his heavenly presence; it is the lamp from which shines the light of his splendour and majesty—"his body of glory," the apostle says,[1] who had seen it.

We could not rationally conceive of God dwelling in a tree or stone, or incarnating Himself in an animal. Fetichism and Egyptian idolatry attempted this combination, involving religion in unspeakable debasement and immorality. Now the Gnostics of the early ages of Christianity contended that results similarly grotesque and degrading follow from belief in the human incarnation of God. They insisted that this doctrine could only be received as a myth or symbol of divine truth. They denied, *à priori* and in principle, the *birth* of the Son of God. They repudiated the whole idea of the Incarnation in the interests of spiritual religion, claiming to be defenders of the purity of the Godhead, and maintaining its transcendence above material mixtures and limitations, above the vulgar and offensive incidents of physical existence. In their eyes the doctrine of St John and the epistle to the Hebrews, taken in its plain, historical sense, was grossly carnal and idolatrous; and they strove to explain their teaching, as they did certain expressions of the Old Testament pointing the same way, as anthropomorphisms and poetical figures, parables under which ideal truths concerning God and salvation were addressed to the popular mind.

[1] Phil i. 21.

The Gnostic heresies were partly of Jewish, but mainly of Greek and philosophical origin. They exaggerated the Hebrew doctrine of the transcendence of God and his separation from the life of nature, while they retained the pagan, naturalistic sense of the animalism of man. In their view there was an absolute repugnance between nature and spirit, and an irreconcilable dualism in man himself; so that the soul could be emancipated only by the destruction of the body and by deliverance from material conditions. On such principles, of course, a real incarnation was impossible; the Son of God could only come to destroy the world instead of saving it, and human nature could not be redeemed otherwise than by its dissolution. On these principles it was impossible to establish any mediation between man and God; and it was equally impossible to construct a working ethics for existing human life. If the body with its natural functions and conditions is essentially evil, it has to be treated in one or other of two ways: either it must be reduced in its activities to the narrowest limits (by asceticism), or abandoned to wickedness as a thing hopelessly corrupt and vicious (by licentiousness). This latter policy some heretical teachers were not ashamed to avow, under the pretext of "using up the flesh." The contest which the early Church maintained for two centuries with Gnosticism upon the doctrine of the Person of Christ, was a contest for ethical equally with dogmatic truth, at once for sound morals and for true religion.

The Christian doctrine of "the Word made flesh" exalts to a singular degree the value and meaning of human personality. Men had discerned in themselves, so soon as

they began to reflect, what is found nowhere else in the visible world—reason, love, will: in a word, personal being, the essentials of a nature, however finite, yet allied with the infinite. This conviction is now verified with a divine emphasis. The truth already believed, that man was formed in God's image, becomes startlingly evident, when the eternal Son presents Himself wearing that image and under the limitations of a human body exhibits the essential signs of Godhead, when He says, standing a man amongst men, "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." You cannot see God in the blazing sun, in the star-strewn heavens, in the pomp of cloud or storm, in the splendid revelations of science: only "a part of his ways," only the skirt of his garments and the gleaming of the jewels on his robe. But you see the very God Himself, and heaven with its angels beholds Him, in "the man Christ Jesus."—And we too are men! While we think humbly, we must needs think grandly of our nature and our race, seeing that He is not ashamed to call us brethren

By the coming of the Son of God human vision is immensely widened, and the range of our interests and relationships extended. Our earth is linked to the greater worlds above us. A destiny is opened up to man in the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, commensurate with his spiritual powers. The limits imposed by our environment, limits so narrow and uncertain, so oppressive and even crushing to multitudes of our fellows, are already crossed by faith and hope. On all sides we gain an enlargement of being and of outlook, a "more abundant life," in comparison with which life without Christ is as life within prison walls. Being sons

of God by our affinity to Christ, we are "joint-heirs" with Him, "heirs of a kingdom that cannot be moved." We are prepared to expect the good things which God hath prepared for those that love Him: since He has "spared not his own Son," how shall He not "with Him also freely give us all things"?

With Him we are gone up on high,
Since He is ours, and we are his;
With Him we reign above the sky,
We walk upon our subject seas.

We boast of our recovered powers,
Lords are we of the lands and floods;
And earth, and heaven, and all is ours,
And we are Christ's, and Christ is God's!

1. Amongst the dispositions due to the new sense of the dignity of our nature given to us by Christianity, we place foremost the virtue of *self-respect*. This quality is closely allied to the Christian courage described under the former section.

For any real pursuit of virtue or any sustained and effectual service to others, the man so striving or serving must realise in some proper sense the worth of his own soul. We only give out of what we have; we aim only at that which seems within our reach. The individual self is the starting-point and fulcrum of personal activity. The second commandment of the law of Jesus, like unto the first as He is like unto the Father, is this: "Thou shalt love thy neighbour *as thyself*." Without self-love no love to others is possible. The Christian man knows himself to be an object of unique worth in the eyes of God. He is a son of the Most High and a brother of

Jesus Christ. With this faith he cannot despise or despair of himself. The voice of the Almighty says to him: "Thou hast been precious in my sight, and honourable, and I have loved thee." It was this consciousness of the regard of God which sustained the faith and national existence of Israel, when her feeble life seemed again and again on the point of being crushed in the collisions of the great empires that surrounded her, and when a single access of despair must have been fatal. This consciousness of the divine interest in men, enhanced and individualised by the advent of Christ, has become the common property of Christian believers.

It is true that the sense of God's special favour to Israel hardened into the characteristic Jewish pride, and a similar arrogance has too often formed itself in the Christian elect. But this is an abuse and corruption of a sentiment profoundly necessary and salutary to our nature. Christian self-respect is in its basis wholly distinct from pride. It rests on no ground of personal merit or ability, on no external conditions or privileges whatever. The man of the most limited powers, or who to the eye of the world is in the most abject condition, has the same right to cherish this feeling and to cheer his soul with its comforts as the most prosperous and admired of those around him. For he is a man, made in God's image, redeemed by Christ's blood; and Jesus Christ is man, his brother and friend. All other human conditions, and those differences of circumstance on which worldly esteem is based, are trifling in comparison of this. However poor a creature I may be, nay, however low I may have fallen, grasping this truth I feel that I am worth

something still to my Maker, that for me also there is plenteous redemption and good hope through grace.

> Fear not, thou worm Jacob, ye feeble folk of Israel:
> *I* do help thee, and thy redeeming kinsman is the Holy One of Israel.

Thus it is that God in Christ cheers disheartened men.

To the fact of his presence as a man amongst us, our Lord and Saviour added many words to show the value which God sets on the individual soul. No small part of his teaching was directed upon this point. He encourages men, as no other teacher has done, to think worthily and hopefully of themselves. The Christian religion has for the first time given the individual his proper rank. From it has sprung the political doctrine of "the rights of man." The person ceases to be sacrificed, as he had been, recklessly and without scruple by the community; he is taught to consecrate and sacrifice himself. A new reverence, a new care is thrown about human life. Infanticide, practised by the ancient Greeks and Romans as freely as by the Chinese at present, is prohibited. Slavery is gradually and finally abolished,—an institution so deeply wrought into the fabric of the ancient world, that the wisest and most humane philosophers did not dream of its removal. Christ's brothers and freedmen could not for ever be treated as chattels by their brethren. The question had been raised by Jesus, "By how much is a man better than a sheep?" In the presence of his humanity it could be answered only in one way. And the answer involved a revolution in the treatment of men by men, a transformation of the pre-existing social and political relations, the end of which we have by no means reached as yet.

The new sense which the Lord Jesus imparts to each man of the worth of his own soul, gives rise to a new regard for others. It creates that sympathetic tact, that nice perception of what is due to his neighbour, which marks the true "gentleman," in whatever rank of life. He is the one who acts under the maxim, *noblesse oblige*, bearing himself with no personal pride, but in a manner worthy of his rank and origin, and interpreting the feelings of others by his own. This sentiment belongs in its purest form to the child of God, who is "called into the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ" and walks worthily of his calling. The Christian gentleman is the finest product of human nature. He is the son of the Most High, and the heir of all that is noblest in the ages past. And for all his fellows he has the courtesy and good feeling of a brother.

It is instructive to compare the Christian doctrine of human dignity with that of Greek philosophy, so admirably expounded by Aristotle in the *Nicomachean Ethics*.[1] It is digested in the following paragraph:

He speaks of high-mindedness or elevation of soul (μεγαλοψυχια) as "a kind of lustre or beauty arising from the possession of every form of moral excellence," a disposition which "gives to the virtues a richer development, and is unattainable apart from them." It is a mean between abjectness and self-conceit. It is the proper sense which the honourable man has of his own excellence of character. Amongst outward goods, it seeks "honour" for its proper reward and distinction; but it values only the honour paid by superior men, those who are fit to appreciate its worth. The high-minded man "never feels malice," for he despises the injuries that may be done him; he is "never fired with admiration," for there is nothing great in his eyes. "He takes his leisure and is unconcerned, except where great honour may be won or a great work achieved." "He has pleasure in hearing of his own good

[1] *Ethica Nicom.* iv. 7, 8. See *Aristotle's Moral Philosophy*, by W. M. Hatch, pp. 207–219.

deeds, but it is distasteful to him to hear of his obligation to others"; and he is "ashamed to have a service done to him." After this analysis, we are not surprised to find that "prosperous circumstances" —power and wealth and high family—are favourable to the production of the "great-souled" man, although the mere possession of these advantages without corresponding moral elevation gives only the appearance of dignity.

The great Greek philosopher dwells with unusual animation upon this moral picture; it was the highest ideal of his race and age. But how poor a type of character compared with "the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ"! With his complacent self-admiration, his contempt for ordinary men and things, and his haughty pursuit of "honours," this Greek paragon appears to us a far from admirable person. We are tempted to put him in the same class with the Jewish Pharisee. His self-respect rests on the consciousness of superior and independent merit. He thinks that he is not as other men, and has not even the grace to thank God for it. He is the devotee of his own excellence, a finished sample of the pride of self-sufficient reason and self-satisfied virtue.

The dignity of the Christian man rests upon a surer basis and rises to a grander height. He has learnt the lesson taught by the whole of Scripture: "He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord." His glorying concerns himself and the proving of his own work, while it presumes no superiority to others; but its ultimate ground, to which the whole tribute of praise is rendered, lies in the grace given to the saved man in Christ Jesus. Hence is derived the essential worth of his character; by this standard it is measured; and this grace supplies the object to which life and hope are directed. In this sense St Paul writes, exulting in the

honour of his personal calling in Christ: "In nothing did I come behind the very chiefest apostles—though I am nothing!"

The union of dignity and humility indicated by the above words of St Paul constitutes the distinctive Christian ethos, the temper and bearing of the regenerate man. The self-respect that is derived from the love of God in Christ is qualified by a profound abasement. All boasting in self, all glorying in men is "excluded by the law of faith." It is excluded not only by the remembrance of our unworthiness as sinners, but by a consideration underlying even that; *viz.* the sense of our dependence as children deriving everything from the Almighty Love, "in which we live and move and exist." The paradox of Jesus, "Every one that exalteth himself shall be humbled, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted," is not so much a promise of retribution on the part of God, as it is the statement of what belongs intrinsically to the soul's relation to God in Christ. In the light of this relationship there accrues to each of us an inestimable worth—a worth lying in Him in whom we were created, and "who loved us and gave Himself up for us." The discovery of this fact at once humbles us to the dust and exalts us to heaven.

God's regard for man takes in the Incarnation the form of an amazing *condescension*. Thus it supplies a new sanction to humility, and that of the most weighty and binding nature conceivable. "Have this mind in you," the apostle Paul writes, "which was also in Christ Jesus: who, being in the form of God, deemed not his equality with God a thing for grasping, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a slave, being made in the likeness of men; and being found

in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, becoming obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the cross."[1] Thus viewed and thus enjoined, humility is exalted to the rank of a divine excellence. It is more than a self-regarding grace, more than the lowliness of the Old Testament saint who felt himself overwhelmed by the compassion of the Almighty; it becomes an active, self-devoting humbleness; it is lowliness inspired by love, consenting to be wronged and put to ignominy, "glorying in necessities, distresses, persecutions," sacrificing reputation no less than life for the service of God in the benefit of men. This kind of humility is called specifically "meekness," which is the name for the bearing of the Christian disciple toward the indignities of the world, seen first in Him who was "led as a lamb to the slaughter" and who bids us learn of Him and bear his yoke. Affronts and disesteem of every kind and degree the follower of Jesus bears without resentment, in his Master's behalf. He is well content to be "of no reputation." But he is so content, he abandons his name to the world's contempt, without any abjectness of spirit or forfeiture of self-respect, because he abides in the favour of God, because he knows that "the fire will prove every man's work of what sort it is," because he can say at the last with the dying Saviour, "Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit." And so we read in St Paul's exhortation to lowly care for the well-being of others the final words of lofty promise: "Wherefore also God highly exalted Him, and gave unto Him the name which is above every name; that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow."

Few things are more unworthy of a Christian, or more

[1] Phil. ii. 5-8.

certain indications of a shallow faith, than jealousy for one's reputation and eagerness for the world's praise. "How can you believe," said the Lord Jesus to the Jews, "who receive honour from one another, and the glory that cometh from the only God you seek not?" The self-regard of the Christian man is the antithesis of vainglory and self-assertion. His dignity is the dignity of meekness and patience and affectionate resignation.

In the lowly virtues, it is admitted, Christianity has an unrivalled eminence. Not that they were unknown, or altogether unpractised, before the coming of Christ. Their strain of devout lowliness is a peculiar charm of the Psalms of the Old Testament, and self-effacement was preached in many Eastern creeds. But the faith of Christ has given to humility a more positive character, a joyous and serviceable spirit. There is combined with it a human elevation, a consciousness of the sanctity of individual life, which do not diminish meekness and submission towards God, but set them upon a higher level and make them more conspicuous and effective elements of character. In this direction philosophical ethics were lamentably defective. Their estimate of personal worth rested on the comparison of man with the brutes, and of the free citizen with the slave. Hence it was a proud estimate, and yet in some respects low and vicious. The hero of Hellenic art and poetry is a magnificent being, splendidly developed in mind and body,[1] full of courage, patriotism, generosity in

[1] Mr Francis Galton, the eminent statistician, on a careful scientific estimate concludes that the average Athenian citizen of the age of Pericles was as much the intellectual superior of the average English citizen of our own times as the latter is superior to the African negro. See his *Hereditary Genius*, p. 331.

friendship; but he always lacks one thing—to hear the voice which says, "Learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart." His accomplishments are ruined by his arrogance. He cannot be decently moral without self-applause; he makes a new virtue of his pride,—the pride that goes before a fall! The Buddhist ethics, on the other hand, measuring man with the enduring powers of nature and the insoluble mysteries of thought, has the note of passive resignation and helplessness. The keynote of Christian ethics is that of an exultant humility, a passionate, self-renouncing hope for mankind.

2. The religion of the Incarnation, we have said, gives us faith in man. That faith, in its self-regarding aspect, imparts a new sense of the value of the individual soul as it exists in God. But at the same time it creates a new care for others; and Christianity is the religion of *human fraternity.* Its first law is, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God"; its second, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."

God in Jesus Christ linked Himself to universal mankind—He reconciled to Himself not a nation, not a class, an *élite* of superior religiously and morally disposed persons—but "a world"! It was necessary that the incarnate Son should be born of a particular family and country; He could be of no other than Jewish and Davidic birth, in harmony with the course of revelation. "Salvation," He said, "is of the Jews"; and He was "sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." Jewish exclusiveness would fain have monopolized his advent, and made of the Redeemer a son of Abraham instead of "the Son of man." Had the Israelite nation received Jesus of Nazareth for Messiah, this danger would have been very formidable. The

jealousy of the Jewish nature broke out in the apostolic Church; and it cost St Paul a severe struggle to vindicate the universalism of the new faith and to maintain that "in Christ is no Jew and Greek." But with the overthrow of Judaism this peril disappeared. The Gentiles entered the heritage of Israel, whose "fall became the riches of the world." The temptation of the Gentile subsequently has been not to doubt or limit his own rights in Christ, but to disparage those of the Jew, "boasting against the natural branches." Our Gentile evangelist, St Luke, has traced the genealogy of Jesus back through Zerubbabel, through David, through Abraham and the patriarchs, stopping nowhere till he reached the fountain head: "which was the son of Adam, which was the son of God."

The record of the words and life of Christ, as given both by St Matthew and St Luke, makes it clear that the Lord Jesus placed Himself in a universal relationship to mankind. He rose altogether above the horizon of his Jewish birth. It was necessary for Him to secure a foothold and starting-point for the work of his kingdom within the existing Judaism; there his religion was to find its prepared foundation, its first tools and instruments, "beginning at Jerusalem." But He bade his apostles "go and make disciples of all the nations"; He told the Jews at quite an early period of his ministry that "many shall come from east and west, and sit down with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of God," while they, "the sons of the kingdom," would "be cast forth into the outer darkness." The bigotry of the Judaism of our Lord's time was, in fact, an infidelity to the teaching of the Old Testament. This the apostle Paul had no difficulty in making

out. It was promised to Abraham: "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." The main drift of prophecy was to the effect that the privileges of Israel were held in trust for the world, that God was the Father of the spirits of all flesh, that faith and obedience raise men of heathen birth to equality with the elect people, and that, as Isaiah puts it, in the consummation of God's kingdom, Israel is to be "a third with Egypt and with Assyria, a blessing in the midst of the earth."[1]

By arguments such as these the exclusiveness of Jewish pride was broken down, and the first attempt to set up barriers of caste within Christianity was defeated. The ground was laid, broadly and firmly, for the building up of a world-wide community, a fraternity of redeemed men of every nation, formed within the Church of the living God and united in the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ. It was the task of the apostle Paul, by birth and training a Hebrew of the Hebrews, to develop this fruitful principle of the new faith. He proclaims himself "debtor both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish." He teaches the Colossian Christians, moving in a society composed of the most heterogeneous elements and seamed with local antipathies, that they "have put on the new man, which is being renewed unto knowledge after the image of Him that created him: where there cannot be Greek and Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, bondman, freeman: but Christ is all things, and in all." Writing to the believers of Ephesus about the jealousies of Jew and Gentile which were then distracting the Churches, the apostle showed how it was Christ's

[1] Isa. xix. 21–25.

purpose to "create the two in Himself into one new man, so making peace," and to "reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross."[1] This purpose awaits its accomplishment; the Gentile and the Jew are still estranged. The work of reconciliation is one of extreme difficulty and complication; every element of human hatred was involved in this contention; it is taking not one generation, but many centuries, to "abolish the enmity." But the goal is in sight, both for the persecuted and embittered Jew and for the fulness of the Gentiles.

In Athens, addressing the aristocracy of culture and surrounded by the splendid monuments of the Greek genius, St Paul proclaimed amongst the first words of his Master's message to mankind, that "God has made of one every nation of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth."[2] Few of St Paul's addresses seem to have been so fruitless at the time; and yet he never uttered words more pregnant with meaning for the future, than when he made from the platform of the Areopagus this declaration of the unity of mankind in God and Christ. Athens, "the eye of Greece, mother of arts and eloquence," the proud capital of intellectual genius, is taught that Hellene and barbarian are one in Jesus Christ, that humanity is of diviner value than its finest craftsmanship, that beauty and art and all the world's glory must bow to the tribunal of the Man whom God ordained, with whom righteousness is the great criterion and character, not skill or science, the object of supreme worth. This teaching subordinates nationality to humanity, and intelleet to conscience; it lays the foundation of the world-kingdom of Christ.

[1] Col. iii. 8–11; Eph. ii. 11–22. [2] Acts xvii. 23–31.

Greece, Rome, Israel are the three cosmopolitan peoples. Their history is the essence of the history of the world; their influence and ideas have been the dominant factors in the evolution of humanity. These three names are synonyms respectively for culture, for politics, and for religion — arts, laws, and faith. Jesus Christ claims dominion over them all: by the power of a divine faith He rules over arts and laws; He wrests from Satan his usurped dominion over "the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them." His title affixed to the cross was written at Pilate's command, St John tells us, "in Hebrew, in Latin, in Greek,"—a fact symbolizing Christ's lordship over all that those languages contain and signify. He came in the fulness of time; He stood at the confluence of the streams of history, uniting their current in Himself, the Son of man, Heir and Lord of the ages. Born under the law of Israel and the rule of Rome, while He spoke (in all probability) along with his mother tongue the language of Greece, Jesus gives to the true religion with a new fulness of content a new and boundless width of empire. His salvation is of the Jews, but for the Gentiles. The narrow creed of Israel is transformed into a faith for mankind, a leaven to leaven the whole lump of human existence.

Jesus Christ restores the lost unity of our race. He gathers into his hand and weaves together the broken and tangled threads of history; He supplies in his divine-human brotherhood, for the first time since the dispersal of the nations, a centre powerful and attractive enough to reunite the human family, a foundation on which it is possible to reorganize the society of the nations and form them into a world-kingdom of righteousness and peace.

The principles of the gospel wrought from the beginning toward this end. Slowly and patiently, like all the enduring works of God, has this task been pursued. Its accomplishment is delayed at a thousand points by human passion, rebellion, ignorance, and unbelief. Often the good realized in one age appears to be destroyed in the next, and the new construction added to the temple of God by one set of builders is half demolished, or desecrated, by those who follow. Yet something always remains after each reaction, some ground abidingly won, some principle enduringly fixed in the consciences of men. Amidst the errors, exaggerations, and party-cries of our own time, the confused noise and blind heat as of "ignorant armies" that "clash by night," things around us are making, under the influence of the Spirit of Christ, for a wider and deeper humanity, for the abolition of caste, for the solidarity of mankind, for universal brotherhood, intelligence, and ordered freedom,—because they are making for the clearer recognition of the Son of man and the acknowledgement of the living authority of the Lord Jesus Christ over all human persons and affairs.

When the gospel of Christ was first preached, it began to work speedily as an assimilating and transforming principle upon the fabric of Greek culture and Roman polity which it found existing. It was acting powerfully upon these great constructions and experiencing, sometimes for evil sometimes for good, their reaction upon itself, when in the fifth and following centuries the mass of crude and violent Northern barbarism was thrown into this strange ferment. The history of the Christian era, up to this time, is the history of the combination of these various

elements; it is the history of the Christian principle of brotherhood as it sought to dominate and leaven first the Græco-Roman society into which it was cast, and then the wider European life which began with the irruption of the Goths and Vandals into the Roman empire. When we survey the vast quantity of the material to be leavened and the manifold corruption and crudity of its condition, we scarcely wonder at the delay and imperfection of the results achieved, at the very partial Christianization of Europe or of England up to the present time. With millions of men in arms on the soil of Christian nations, and millions more filled with discontent and burning hatred of the social system under which they live, Christian brotherhood is a hope that shines yet in the distance; and we sing at Christmastide the angels' song of "peace and goodwill to men" in prophecy of things we see not yet. But "the vision is for an appointed time; it shall come, and shall not tarry." Often the leaven has seemed to be overpowered and lost in the seething vileness of the lump around it; yet it has never failed to reassert itself, and reformations and revivals have followed periods of declension, carrying forward the hope of humanity to some new point of its development.

We note two chief reactionary tendencies which have counter-worked the principle of Christian fraternity, and have checked and perverted its development in the progress of the Church; viz. *sacerdotalism* and *militarism*: the influence of the priest, who puts himself between the soul and God, and the influence of the State-ruler, who claims in virtue of his external power to stand above his fellow believers in the Church and to dictate in her affairs.

These obstructive influences have acted sometimes in independence, or even in conflict with each other; frequently they have joined their forces and shown themselves in close alliance. This was eminently the case at the epoch when the Roman empire became Christian. Constantine, the victorious Imperator, was seen sitting at the head of a Christian council, a man not even baptized, and stained with many crimes, who yet, half heathen as he was, had occasion to give lessons in courtesy and forbearance to Christian ecclesiastics! On the other hand, the episcopate was protected by the State and had civil functions conferred upon it.

This was a fatal precedent; its influence has overshadowed the whole subsequent history of Christendom. Following in the same track, the Roman bishop assumed more and more of the state and wealth of a temporal prince. He served himself heir to the name and prestige of the ancient mistress of the world, while his spiritual pretensions became increasingly arrogant. As the vicar of God, the Pope claimed in the Middle Ages to be the universal director of the conscience, the final judge in all matters of religion and morals, and consequently to be the disposer of kingdoms and the visible centre of divine power on earth. The sacerdotalism of mediæval Rome was in its methods and ambitions to a large extent the imperialism of ancient Rome under a Christian guise.

At the same time, the autocracy of the Roman papalism carried out to their issue and concentrated in a single hand the assumptions previously developed by the priesthood. Popery is the consummation of the hierarchical principle. For the instant that you admit an essential distinction

between the minister and the layman as in Christ, you annul the Christian brotherhood; you institute a sacerdotal caste, which culminates by a natural growth in some such despotism as the papacy. Hildebrand was latent in Cyprian. Any doctrine of the "grace of orders" which sets the clergyman in his spiritual character above the ordinary believing layman, and makes the former an indispensable channel of Christ's grace to the latter, which turns Church office into a peculiar mystical function and constitutes its holder by virtue of his ordination a sacrificing and absolving priest, *ipso facto* destroys the unity of the Church. It breaks up the ground of that unity, consisting in the free and equal brotherhood of true believers in the Son of God. It contradicts that decisive word of the Lord: "One is your Master, even Christ; all ye are brethren."[1] The Christian commonalty is robbed of its priesthood; Christ's freedmen are brought again into bondage and fear. St Peter's successors claim the very lordship over God's heritage which he solemnly repudiated.[2] The condition of the mass of the laity in the Greek and Roman Churches affords sad evidence of the effect of priestly dominance in dwarfing and impoverishing the life of the body of Christ. And the Romanist doctrines of the sacraments, of the intercession of the Virgin Mother and the saints, and of the efficacy of prayers and masses for the dead, with the practice of the confessional, have all furthered the same end, in separating between the Lord Jesus Christ and his people and hiding from men his immediate presence in the Spirit; they have welded firmly together the bonds of hierarchical dominion.

[1] Matt. xxiii. 8–12. [2] 1 Peter v. 1–4.

The words of Vinet, addressed to the Free Church of his native province in Switzerland at its formation, are full of wise warning upon this point:

> The attributes of the minister are distinct, but have nothing absolutely exclusive. . . . One must respect a division of labour which God Himself has consecrated; but if we should go so far as to presume that there is any single act of Church service which, necessary in itself and urgent in the given case, can nevertheless be performed only by the man who is called pastor, so that if discharged by another member of the flock the same act would be invalid and void, we should by this admission have virtually re-established within the bosom of Protestantism the Roman hierarchy, and under the modest name of "ministers" we should in reality have furnished ourselves again with priests.[1]

We hold that the ministers of Christ are members of his body, no more so and no less than their lay brethren. They administer functions and exercise powers for the service of all which belong to the entire body of the Lord, and which it delegates, under his direction and according to the gifts for ruling and teaching distributed by his Spirit, to this and that amongst its many members.

We will say little of the injury inflicted by secular power on the Christian brotherhood, of the stubborn opposition it has made to the establishment of human fraternity in Christ. This resistance has been inspired very largely by the military temper of social and national life. It is a many-headed evil, patent to us all and easy to denounce, but how difficult to apprehend in its full bearings and to grapple with effectually! The name of "Cæsar" stood in our Lord's day for the supreme secular authority. The

[1] A. Vinet, *Liberté religieuse et Questions ecclesiastiques*, p. 667. Quoted on p. 606 of *A. Vinet, histoire de sa vie et de ses œuvres*, par E. Rambert (Lausanne, 1875). This testimony was amongst the last public acts of Vinet's noble and strenuous life.

Roman empire was the outcome, under the law of the survival of the fittest, of the military *régime* which filled the course of previous history, and which continues to be a chief factor in human affairs, tempered and restrained but not yet destroyed by Christianity. When the Church accepted an establishment from the Roman emperor and thus identified itself with militarism, it immensely weakened its moral influence and compromised its spiritual position.

Had the Church at that crisis maintained its freedom, keeping "the things of God" aloof from those "of Cæsar," and treated the emperor flushed with victory like any common sinner, how different the history of Christendom might have been! The Church, under priestly guidance, grasped prematurely at temporal dominion and attempted to utilise "the secular arm." By a monstrous abuse of Scripture (endorsed, alas! by St Augustine), the word of Jesus, "Compel them to come in," was made the watch-word of the alliance of Church and State. Conversion was carried on by imperial order. As court fashions changed, the orthodox and the heretics were in turn proscribed by the government. Vast numbers of barbarians were baptized under the terror of the sword of Frankish kings; and the Western Church was crowded with such believers as these, who brought their heathenism and brutality with them into the fold of Christ. Instead of being a leaven working within, Christianity had become a sort of paint laid over an unwashed and unregenerate world. From these unhappy errors and crimes we are suffering to-day. Not, indeed, until the last two centuries and since the Reformation, has the Christian principle begun radically to affect the great civilised governments;

but now at length the deeply rooted traditions of Roman imperialism, with its "rights of conquest" and its cynical assertion of the claim of the stronger to exploit for their advantage weaker nations, begin to be loosened under the moral influences of Christianity. It took fourteen centuries to bring to an end slavery in Europe; the kindred system of militarism gives way still more slowly. But the one institution is doomed like the other.

Mr. Wesley says of the conversion of Constantine:[1]

> Persecution never did, never could, give any lasting wound to genuine Christianity. But the greatest it ever received, the grand blow which was struck at the very root of that humble, gentle, patient love which is the fulfilling of the Christian law, the whole essence of true religion, was struck by Constantine the Great, when he called himself a Christian, and poured in a flood of riches, honours, and power upon the Christians, more especially upon the clergy.
>
> I have been long convinced, from the whole tenor of ancient history, that Constantine's calling himself a Christian . . . was productive of more evil to the Church than all the ten persecutions put together. . . . From the time that the Church and the State, the kingdoms of Christ and of the world, were so strangely and unnaturally blended together, Christianity and heathenism were so thoroughly incorporated with each other, that they will hardly ever be divided till Christ comes to reign upon earth.

If we were to say that political relations and dependence on the State have secularised the Church and have filled it with unspiritual persons and diverted it to unspiritual aims, that these causes obstruct and chill, if they do not destroy, fraternal life amongst its membership — if we were to condemn that ancient and inveterate evil,—we should also have to say that deference to wealth and the influences of class jealousies in free Churches may have a similarly baneful effect. Envying and strife and faction

[1] *Sermons*, lxi, cii; *Works*, vol. vi, p. 246, vol. vii, p. 156 (4th ed.).

are continually rending the body of Christ with miserable schisms. The meannesses of personal ambition and display, the indiscipline, the insincerities, the covetous, harsh, unsanctified, unforgiving temper of Christian professors, have often made Church-life a scandal; and men of the world say, not without excuse, If these are your Christians, heaven forbid that we should be like them! It is in vain for us to preach fraternity to the world outside, to denounce war and bid the nations lay aside their hatreds, while within our Churches we bite and devour one another, while religious discussions are carried on with rancour and acrimony, with the weapons of rhetorical violence and the language of suspicion and contempt. We need to repeat to ourselves constantly St Paul's words to Timothy: "The Lord's servant must not strive, but be gentle towards all, apt to teach, forbearing, in meekness correcting them that oppose themselves." When we invite men to join our brotherhood, we must see to it that it is a true, kindly, and Christian fraternity to which we invite them.

The social questions of our day are, as *questions*, the result of Christianity. Their pressure is due to the advancing and irresistible evolution of the principle of Christian brotherhood, which acts on the minds of men who are far outside the communion of the Church. The existence of slavery and prostitution never troubled the pagan moralist. The condition of the common people (mostly slaves) or of the distant barbarians was no concern of his. Humanity, as we understand it, was an idea almost wholly foreign to ancient culture. The philosopher wrote for Greeks and citizens, for men of leisure and cultivation, not for the mob. Tradesmen and artisans

were the butt of his scorn. In his heart he would say, like his Jewish contemporary, "This people which knoweth not the law are cursed." The Roman government, cruel as it was, had more humanity than the philosophers. But the Son of God became one of the multitude. He was the carpenter's son, and preached his gospel to the poor. His first disciples were peasants and fishermen. Slaves and outcasts crowded into the Church of Jesus, so soon as the doors were opened in the Gentile world.

It was an ill day for that Church when riches and empire allied themselves with it, when they succeeded, as they did so largely, in ruling the Church as a thing of this world, and identified it in the eyes of the people with themselves. In our times there is going on a deep and, as we trust, effectual revolt against that compact. The rights and needs of the poor are being studied by Christian men with intense zeal and sympathy. The rich and favoured classes are gaining a new conscience and are waking up to feel, as never in any age of the world before, that they are their brethren's keepers. Evils that have existed time without mind, and have hitherto been treated unconcernedly as matter of course, are now felt to be intolerable. Crusades against social and national wrongs are commencing on all sides, that half bewilder us by their number and discordant cries. There may be much that is misdirected, much that is crude and sentimental in the humanitarian enthusiasm of the day; but what is the chaff to the wheat? We are witnessing an astonishing outburst of altruism, a real and sound revival of compassion amongst civilized men. The spirit of Christian humanity appears to be advancing to some fresh and enduring

development. Throughout Christendom there is rising a tide of brotherly sympathy, of love and pity for our race flowing from the heart of the Son of man, which bears along with it for multitudes of our fellow men hope and blessing unknown to former generations. Surely, in these latter days of grace it may be said again: "The day-spring from on high hath visited us, to give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death." The nineteenth century ought not to close without sending on to the twentieth for its program, *the abolition of war, the confederation of the Christian peoples, the organization of the forces of science for the uplifting of the human race, and the establishment of a world-wide brotherhood of souls in the fellowship of God's Son Jesus Christ.*

The manifestation of the Son of God in human life throws a new light upon every feature and element of that life, and gives a changed direction to its impulses and workings. "Behold," He cries, "I make all things new." A new heaven is visible; a new earth is in the making. God is known by a dearer and holier name; humanity is refashioned for his habitation. In the light of the Incarnation we may survey and systematize the whole world of character and duty. For our present purpose what has been said must suffice. Other topics involved in the principle of the Incarnation—such as *the moral uses of pain, the discipline of the body, and the relation of man to external nature*—will meet us again at a later point.

We have only to add, at this stage of the exposition, one further consideration arising from the doctrine of the Person of Christ, which is as obvious as it is essential in

the inculcation of Christian morals. He "left you an example, that ye should walk in his steps." The gospel is the history of a faultless human existence. It supplies an historical ideal, a visible working pattern for life and death. The example of Jesus Christ does not supersede other patterns nor destroy their value; it corrects and crowns them all. God, who had beforehand "led many sons to glory," has also "made the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings." The rules of the perfect life are summed up in this: "He that saith he abideth in God ought himself so to walk even as Christ walked." Or as the Master puts it: "If any man serve Me, let him *follow* Me!"[1]

The exhortation is so familiar that we scarcely reflect upon it; we do not realise the immense difference it has made to the world, to unbelievers in only a less degree than to believers in his religion, that such a one as Jesus Christ has lived on this earth. The standard of human excellence has been permanently raised. The image of Christ is stamped upon the conscience of civilised men, and they cannot shake off its influence.

> See thou, that countest reason ripe
> In holding by the law within,
> Thou fail not in a world of sin,
> And ev'n for want of such a type.

Wherever the story of the Gospels travels, there is heard the voice of the Son of God, whose authority may be denied by the intellect, but never ignored by the heart, whose word searches and kindles the conscience as a flame of fire, and in hours of sorrow speaks even to proud and hardened men

[1] Heb. ii. 10; 1 John ii. 6; John xii. 26.

like the memories of a long-lost home, whose doors haply are still open.

> Thanks to the human heart by which we live,—

but chiefest thanks to Him, the Master of all hearts, who became in all things like unto his brethren, that He might feel our human feelings and be touched with the sense of our weaknesses, making Himself companion and guide to God's children in the troubled and toilsome pilgrimage of earth! To the lovely and commanding example of Jesus of Nazareth is added, for those who obey Him, the living sympathy, the leadership and priestly mediation of the risen Christ, who sits upon the throne of the most high God.

He guides us into the way of peace that his holy feet have marked. Recall again, for a moment, the path along which the footsteps of Jesus lead. The life of Jesus Christ was a perfect life, because it was a perfectly religious life, a life of pure godliness and true humanity. Love for the Father, affection and respect for men, were its characteristics. Reverence, meekness, tenderness, the virtues despised in the world's proud wisdom, He has invested with the divinest charm, and given them their regnant place in human character. With these were blended in the nature of Jesus a swift insight, a high, stern justice, a burning energy, the might and glory of a sovereign manhood, by the side of which the types of classic heroism show weak and tame.

> And so the Word had breath, and wrought
> With human hands the creed of creeds
> In loveliness of perfect deeds,
> More strong than all poetic thought;

Which he may read that binds the sheaf,
Or builds the house, or digs the grave,
And those wild eyes that watch the wave
In roarings round the coral reef.

His virtue is suitable and accessible to men all the world over. It invites and aids us upwards; but after each new ascent it rises above us in loftier grandeur. And the best attainments of the best and most gifted and morally resolute of men since his coming still fall, by their own confession, immeasurably short of the measure of the stature of the fulness of the Christ.

We have defined Christian ethics as the science of the life of sonship to God. We may now define it as the science of *the life according to Christ*, the life of fellowship with the Son of God's love. He whom we follow, the ideal Son of man and King of men, is the eternal Son of God. Our two definitions are one therefore, as Christ and the Father are one. "I in them," He prayed for his disciples, "and Thou in Me,—that they may be perfected into one." Your life is hid, with Christ, in God. To be a brother and servant of Jesus Christ is to be a child of God. To walk as He walked is to live and move and have one's being in God. "All things are yours," cries the apostle; "and ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's."[1] Such is the chain that binds earth to heaven, and connects the incidents and duties of your individual life with the will and love of the eternal Father.

Let us repeat:

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth:
And in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord.

[1] 1 Cor. iii. 22, 23.

CHAPTER IV

THE INDWELLING OF THE SPIRIT OF GOD

The Paraclete, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name. . . .
Ye know Him; for He dwelleth with you, and He shall be in you.
—THE LORD JESUS CHRIST

WE have previously drawn from the teaching of the New Testament two distinct definitions of the Christian life, each of them necessary to the other: it is the life of divine sonship, and the life according to Christ. A third definition is required to complete these two, which we must now attempt to state. The true life of man is *life in the Spirit.* When the apostle Paul, in deterring the Corinthians from strife and impurity, appeals to them with the solemn words, "Know ye not that ye are God's temple, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" or when Christ Himself, at the beginning of his public work and soon after his baptism with the Holy Spirit in the river Jordan, "spake of the temple of his body," a new and wonderful light was thrown upon our human nature and a revelation was made that goes to the depth of the moral consciousness. Man is not merely the creature of God, he is God's dwelling-place. He does not communicate with God externally, as a detached and self-complete personality, but through the Spirit of God operating within him.

There are two parallel accounts of man's creation given

us in the story of Genesis.[1] The first connects us (to speak in New Testament language) with the Father through the Son of his love: "And God created man in his own image, in the image of God created He him; male and female created He them." The second narrative connects man with God by his Holy Spirit—the Breath of God: "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." Now the breath that the child draws in with the first vital movement of its lungs is required, and that in growing measure, for every following inspiration. The atmosphere is its constant element of life. So the breath of God sustains, as it created, each living soul. We know God transcendent in the Father Almighty, descendent and ascendant in Jesus Christ his Son, and God also immanent, communicative—a life-sustaining breath, a cherishing and kindling fire—in Him who is called "the Holy Spirit." He is promised to the Church in perpetuity by the Lord Jesus, as "the Spirit of truth," "the Paraclete." He is called "the Spirit of the Father," and "of Christ."

I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Giver of life,
Who proceedeth from the Father and the Son,
Who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified,
Who spake by the prophets.

Christ is the revealer of the Holy Spirit, as He is of the Father. He revealed the Spirit, we admit, less fully and ostensibly than the Father. We observed that the Son of God disclosed Himself as if by the way and under

[1] Gen. i. 26-28; ii. 7.

constraint, in the act of showing men the Father. And there is a like reserve, a like subordination to the glory of the Father and of the Son, in that which is taught us concerning the Holy Spirit. "He shall not speak from Himself," said Jesus, "He shall glorify Me: for He shall take of mine, and declare it unto you."[1] As He speaks not "from Himself," so the Holy Spirit in Scripture does not speak much distinctly of Himself. There is a certain mystery and reticence, continued to the end, in the sayings of revelation concerning the Person of the Holy Ghost. His personality is revealed, certainly enough, as we hold; but it is by implication and allusion, by rays of light that shoot out here and there, escaping (as one may say) from the depths of the Godhead. He is as the wind, whose influence you feel at every turn, in every breath, but whose form and movement you cannot follow with the eye. "Thou hearest the sound thereof, but knowest not whence it cometh, and whither it goeth."[2] The stress of New Testament teaching obviously lies upon the offices of the Holy Spirit rather than upon his Person. Nay, is it not just because the good Spirit of God is so near us and so closely involved in the best workings of our own spirit, that we find it difficult to realize the distinctness of his being? He hides Himself in the soul of man, as He hides in the burning depths of Godhead. It is a thought which stirs us to amazement and awe:

> Ocean, wide-flowing ocean, Thou, of uncreated love;
> I tremble as within my soul I feel thy waters move!

Let us not reward his condescension with unbelief; nor because He dwells with us, veiling his awful splendour

[1] John xvi. 12–15. [2] John iii. 8.

and humbling his might to aid our weakness, let us for this deny his presence and treat his fellowship as an empty name.

Theologians have argued with reason that the being of the Holy Spirit, as a third in the essential Godhead, is a truth involved in the doctrine of the Father and the eternal Son; that the distinction of two Persons, thus related in one essence, requires the third common to them both to complete the divine fulness and maintain the unity. A bare duality, they say, is inconceivable and incompatible with the oneness of the Godhead; but a tri-unity is a perfectly intelligible and even necessary conception.[1] These reasonings carry us into a region of lofty and difficult speculation, where we shall not linger. Certain it is that the communion of the Holy Spirit was essential to our Lord, when He dwelt among us, the Word made flesh. Without this bond we cannot conceive of any such direct and continual fellowship between the incarnate Son on earth and the unseen Father in heaven, as that which manifestly was maintained. In speaking to his disciples of the Holy Spirit, the Lord Jesus revealed to them the secret of his own life,—the element in which the Father and the Son evermore communicate.

But while, as the beloved Son, Jesus Christ possessed in Himself the Spirit of God without measure, He held Him in trust for his human brethren. This is the "good gift" which the heavenly Father, because He is a father, "will give to those that ask"—to those that ask, as the Lord subsequently added, "in my name."[2] The Spirit of

[1] See Dorner's *System of Christian Doctrine*, vol. i, pp. 422-6.

[2] Luke xi. 13; John xiv. 16, 26, xvi. 23, 24.

God dwelt with the Son of God on earth as with no other, abiding with Him as God with God, even as the Word Himself had dwelt with the Father in the beginning. Christ in his last discourse speaks of the Holy Ghost as being under his direction and at his disposal. But He possessed this Spirit of the Father in no exclusive, self-appropriating way—rather as a "promise of the Father" to be "shed forth" at the appointed time, as a stream of divine might and love that flowed into the vessel of his sanctified humanity, and was there gathered and waiting till the vessel should be broken and its fragrance and power poured into the corrupt and dying world.

Christ has revealed to us the Holy Spirit by life and action more than by word. In the pure nature of the Son of man we best discern the activity of the Spirit of God in man. The incarnation, in fact, discloses for the first time the spiritual capabilities of our being. Of all human capacities the highest and grandest is that of receiving the Holy Ghost. We could not conceive of the Son of God incarnate in a humanity that was "sensual, having not the Spirit." Only as that nature was formed by the Spirit, clothed with the Spirit, possessed by the Spirit, saturated and steeped, as one may say, in the influence of the Holy Spirit of God, could it be in union with the Godhead—Son of man at once and Son of God. Now what we see in Jesus Christ is precisely that which is proper to men; it is the characteristic of the ideal man to be filled with the Spirit. Let us then attempt to trace, so far as we are permitted, the influence of the Holy Spirit in the life of Jesus Christ.

"The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, the power of

the Highest shall overshadow thee." Thus it was said to the mother of our Lord in the announcement of the mystery of his birth. This saying, to our minds, throws a backward light on the record of creation; the overshadowing of Mary resembles that brooding of "the Spirit of God" over the primeval elements, through which creation was conceived and in gradual and ordered birth a world of intelligence and beauty came to being. The nature which the Lord Jesus took from his human mother was so moulded and informed by the Spirit of God from its inception, that it was an absolutely "holy thing."[1] The same Spirit touched and glanced with a supernatural light on all the elect group who surrounded his infancy and guarded its most holy secret.

Passing on to the next great crisis in his history, we see Him who is to "baptize with the Holy Ghost and with fire," Himself first baptized in the sight of men with the self-same Spirit. On Jesus the Spirit descends not in fire, as when He fell on men with hearts naturally cold and slow, like our own; He came as the dove brooding in peace over the soul where all is kindred to itself, which finds its congenial home where there is no flesh that lusts against the Spirit, but a nature in all ways apt and willing for the call of God. "Full of the Spirit," Jesus goes up from the banks of Jordan. "Led by the Spirit," He sets forth to encounter Satan in the wilderness and to bear the test of temper and will that shall fit Him for the Messianic task. "Returning in the power of the Spirit to Galilee," Jesus preached in the synagogue of Nazareth, "where He was brought up"; and we are told that

[1] Luke i. 35.

He opened the book, and found the place where it was written, The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He hath anointed Me to preach glad tidings to the poor: He hath sent Me to proclaim release to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.[1]

These words strike the note of our blessed Lord's entire ministry. In this power He wrought and taught throughout his course. "The Spirit descended as a dove out of heaven; and it *abode* upon Him."[2] By this influence Jesus Christ was henceforth guided along his path of conflict and sacrifice. As the Holy Spirit of God, that Spirit in Jesus sought out and detected its enemies in the spirits of evil and darkness. "By the Spirit of God," He said to the Jews, "I cast out demons"; and therefore "the kingdom of God is come upon you." Accordingly the men who, seeing the beneficent and God-like miracles of our Saviour, ascribed them to Satan, in doing so committed the most awful of blasphemies, the "sin against the Holy Ghost" which "hath never forgiveness."[3] What is true of the expulsion of the demons is true of all the mighty and gracious works of the Son of man. "God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit," says Peter to Cornelius: "who went about doing good, and healing all those oppressed by the devil; for God was with Him."[4] The same principle holds good of the sayings as of the doings of Jesus. When He declared, "It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life," He was conscious that the utterance of his human lips was charged with the intense, vitalizing energy of the eternal Spirit.

[1] Luke iv. 16–19.
[2] John i. 32, 33.
[3] Matt. xii. 22–32; Luke xi. 14–22.
[4] Acts x. 38.

Do you ask, Why should He need the bestowment of the Spirit, who was Himself from the beginning God with men? Rather we ask, How could He do otherwise than bring with Him and attract to Him the unbounded fulness of the Holy Ghost? "The Father seeketh such to worship Him" as worship in spirit and truth; and the Spirit seeketh such for his instruments—souls that are open to his influence, willing to do the Father's will. Of such men the man Christ Jesus was the pattern and chief. In his case, as in that of every other servant of God, we must distinguish character and calling. There was the intrinsic holiness which belonged to Him from birth; and there was the active, public consecration that rested on the Anointed of God from the hour when, offering Himself to "fulfil all righteousness," He went up from the Jordan banks baptized through the hands of John. By this divine investiture He was ordained to his ministry. The Father visibly sealed and accredited Him to men with his infinite approbation. He was now equipped as a man for the service of men in his appointed work. The baptism of Jesus Christ was no mere outward transaction, performed for the edification of beholders. While it commended the Beloved to the world on the Father's part, it signalized a crisis in the soul of Jesus, an inward inauguration, the actual anointing and inspiring of his humanity for its grand vocation. He who was "born of a woman, born under law," came under the rule of the Spirit of life, under the scope of the great principle that was afterwards formulated by St Paul: "All these things worketh the one and self-same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as He will";[1]

[1] 1 Cor. xii. 11.

save only that in the case of Jesus there could be no "dividing," no "parting asunder" as of cloven tongues. The Father "giveth not the Spirit by measure unto Him." He *giveth*, even unto Him, as to us in our puny capacity; but He gives to the Son unmeasuredly, in a boundless, ceaseless tide, a concentrated and consummated fulness of inspiration.

Thus did the Son of the Father's good pleasure receive the Spirit of promise, which had hitherto been dealt out to inspired men "in many portions and in many fashions." But from henceforth, "of his (Christ's) fulness we all receive." In the risen Christ the plenitude of the divine Spirit comes to dwell in humanity; He breathes on his disciples, and through them on mankind and the future ages, saying, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost." At the feast of tabernacles, as Jesus stood in the temple and watched the water drawn from the well of Siloam and poured upon the altar, He had "cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink. He that believeth on Me, as the Scripture said, Out of him shall flow rivers of living water! But this spake He of the Spirit, which they that believed on Him were to receive:"—so the apostle John adds by way of comment—"for the Spirit was not yet; because Jesus was not yet glorified."[1] When the divine-human Redeemer attains his glory, when He rises to the height of his authority, then at last its full spiritual powers are restored to the human race and mankind acquires its full capacity for God. Man dwells with God for ever in the exalted Jesus: God dwells with man for ever in the Holy Spirit bestowed upon his Church.

[1] John vii. 37–39.

All this is theology, you will say; what has it to do with ethics and practical life? Much every way. Jesus Christ is our living Head: we his members upon earth. We are to be "as He was in this world," partaking of Him as branches of their vine. The Christian life, we have agreed, consists in fellowship with the Redeemer. And *how* did He live? what was the secret of the holiness of Jesus? Did it consist in the fact that He was the eternal Son of God? No, not in that considered by itself. His human nature was humanly perfect, and human needs and conditions were at no point overborne in it. Unless we are to lose hold of the Trinity, unless, in disregard of his own repeated words and the clear teaching of his apostles, we are to confound the personal Deity of the Son of God with the Spirit whom He sends to us from the Father, we must recognize that it was in virtue of the perfect dwelling in Him of the Holy Spirit that He lived a sanctified human life and showed Himself the ideal of humanity and the unsullied mirror of God. He became all this, because He was, in his whole soul and body, and at every moment from his conception to his resurrection, filled with the Holy Ghost. He lived in the Spirit, He was led by the Spirit, He breathed and exhaled the Spirit. Jesus Christ thought, spoke, laboured, rejoiced, and suffered, never alone as an individual man self-contained and self-sufficing, but in the Spirit of his Father. And He hath left us an example, that we should tread in his steps. The true life is the life of dependence on the Holy Ghost.

Now if Jesus Christ is the ideal man, it is plain that no man is his proper self till the Spirit of God dwells in him. We are finding out at the present day, in many directions,

the defects of the long current individualistic systems of ethics. The modern reconstruction of moral philosophy takes for its motto St Paul's saying, "We are members one of another." We see with perfect clearness that an isolated self is a nonentity, a figment of our pride and our defective theories, that the community forms the individual just as much as individuals make up the community. No man, we believe, is truly himself except as he realizes the part that others have in him. You and I are limbs of the social organism; cut off from human affection and service, we are undone; our personality loses its worth with its place in the harmony of being around us. Wanting each other, we are not ourselves. But now are we not compelled to extend this principle further—the truth that life consists in fellowship—and to lift it higher? If there be a God who made us and is the Father of our spirits, does not the law of communion include within its scope our relations to *Him*? If it is no life to exist without personal interests outside of self, and the being of each single man is richer in proportion to the number and value of the ties which bind him to others, must it not be that this necessity has its ground in the soul's affinity to God, who is the spring and centre of personality? If we believe in the social functions of our nature and are sensible that fellowship with our kind is of the texture and substance of our life as men, this consciousness points to the necessity that exists in our reason and heart for fellowship with God the Father of men; it should lead us to feel our need of the communion of the Holy Ghost.

"God is faithful," writes the apostle Paul, "through whom ye were called into the fellowship of his Son our

Lord Jesus Christ." He calls us into an association which existed for us in his counsels from eternity. He invites us to share in the communion with Himself of the Son of his love: "that the love wherewith Thou lovest Me may be in them," prays Jesus to the Father.[1] This community of thought and affection between the soul and God is that in which the bestowments of the New Covenant are comprised. It is the promise of the Father, the gift of the Redeemer; it is the great need of our social and dependent nature. This very blessing St Paul invoked on the Corinthians in his second epistle as the crown of all he desired for them, formulating for the Church in these terms its perpetual benediction: "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the *communion* of the Holy Ghost." For the office of the Holy Spirit is to unite all other spirits, and to constitute a spiritual universe with God for its all in all. We can scarcely think of the eternal Father and the Son distinctly without combining them in our thought in the unity of the Spirit; and it is the same adored and all-pervasive Presence residing in the heart of every child of God, who joins in his mystic body God's scattered children on earth:

> One member knoweth not another here,
> And yet their fellowship is true and near.
> One is their Saviour, and their Father one,
> One Spirit rules them; and among them none
> Lives to himself.

Indeed, it is the influence of the Spirit of God, operative in modes endlessly rich and varied, that forms the bond of every rational community, and imparts the gifts of art and

[1] John xvii. 26.

speech by which men attain a common life. The Holy Spirit revealed by Jesus is the universal Spirit of the ages, who has inspired and guided our race in everything divine and worthy in its corporate existence. In all common labour and kindly service, in the wide human affections overleaping national boundaries and antipathies, which have so wonderfully increased since the coming of Christ, there is found the witness of his presence and the sphere for his manifold and gracious working. Man was framed to be a vessel of the Holy Ghost; mankind, in its varied communities, to be a mighty body where He should dwell and work eternally.

He who brooded over the creation has never withdrawn from the intractable and rebellious world which He nursed into being. He has striven with men and nations, when they would not suffer Him to rule them. The finite spirit in us each, isolated from God and "resisting the Holy Ghost," is a defective, crippled, and impotent organ, powerless to rule the flesh and control the elements of nature; for it wants the divine companionship, the light and leading, the inspiring moral force which the Spirit of Christ supplies. Just in so far as it co-operates with the universal Spirit of the divine order, with the holy Intelligence and Will that informs the universe and that wrought in Jesus Christ, does the spirit of any single man amongst us, or of any community of men, or of the nation or the age, or of collective humanity, become worthy of itself and equal to its tasks. "The natural man," whose soul holds aloof from God and seeks its support and its objects in the visible world, sinks naturally into "the sensual man"; so that the two are in fact designated in the language of the New

Testament by the same adjective.[1] We were never meant, never made, to live without the society of God.

Such at least is the psychological theory, the view of man's constitution and necessities, that is given us by Christianity. St Paul unfolds it in the seventh and eighth chapters of his letter to the Romans in terms of vivid description, derived from his own signal experience. Under the designation "the flesh" he sums up those inclinations and tendencies of human nature which make against our inward health and freedom. His theory of the impotence of our nature without the Holy Spirit of God has been confirmed and his description verified by a continuous chain of experience extending through the course of history, to the effect that without some such supernatural power as that which Christianity communicates under the name of "the Holy Spirit," no adequate or sustained moral success is possible. The whole case is summed up in the powerful language of the apostle: "Those that are in the flesh cannot please God. You however are not in the flesh, but in the spirit, if indeed God's Spirit dwells in you."[2]

[1] Ὁ ψυχικός, contrasted in 1 Cor. ii. 14, xv. 44, 46, Jas. iii. 15, Jude 19 with ὁ πνευματικός or πνεῦμα ἔχων. The contrast lies between the man who derives only from nature, and the man in whom God's Spirit dwells.

[2] Rom viii. 9; comp. vii. 24 to viii. 2; Gal. v. 16–19.

CHAPTER V

GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT

We all were made to drink of one Spirit.—St Paul

1. What then, we ask, is the distinctive mark of the presence of the Holy Spirit within men? Christ said to his disciples, "Ye shall receive *power*, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you." This had been true of Himself, in the first instance. He had been, as the two mourners on the way to Emmaus described Him to Himself, "a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people."[1] Those mighty works and all-commanding words of his followed upon his baptism at the Jordan banks, where "God anointed Him with power." From this experience Christ's disciples had learnt something of what they should expect for themselves. The enthusiasm and lofty authority, the amazing moral and intellectual energy manifest in them after the day of Pentecost, were the visible, illustrious proof of the power of the Holy Ghost over our nature, of the quickening effect which his indwelling has upon human activities. This lesson is continually repeated in the New Testament. *Power* and *the Spirit* are terms identified in every variety of mode and phrase. The spirit of the individual man is the seat of the Holy Spirit's working; and from that sphere his sway

[1] Luke xxiv. 19.

extends over the world of human action and relations, breathing health and potency into all.

It was, however, in the physical order rather than the ethical that the newly revealed power of the Spirit of God, which followed on the exaltation of the Son of man, broke forth at first most conspicuously. It appeared in miraculous gifts (charisms) of healing and of utterance, and in ecstatic seizures. The Spirit of Christ in the apostles wrought, in fact, for a certain period miraculously, as He had wrought in Jesus Christ Himself. This the Lord predicted in his promise of the Paraclete: "The works that I do shall ye do also."[1] These outward demonstrations were necessary by way of public evidence, —"for a sign to the unbelieving," and in proof of the continuity of the work of the disciples with that of their Lord.[2] At the same time, these primitive signs of the lordship of the Spirit possess an intrinsic abiding value. They discharged an office most needful and indispensable in that age. They pointed the lesson of the Incarnation, asserting the holiness of the body and claiming it for God. They extended Christ's dominion at the outset to the frontiers of man's existence, to the borderland of material nature where we struggle and suffer so severely, and to that mysterious region of the sub-conscious life, in which man is subject to impressions and possessions full of terror for him and against which his personal will is of little avail. To those who believe in the "manifestations" of the Holy Ghost recorded in the apostolic history the conviction is given that on all sides and in every province of our nature,

[1] John xiv. 10–17.

[2] Acts ii. 12, 33, iv. 29, 30; 1 Cor. xiv. 22; Heb. ii. 3, 4.

whether clear to the light of reason or occult and dim, we are enfolded by the presence of God and open to the access and guardian power of the Holy Spirit.

But as time went on and the Church grew into its normal and established life, the action of the Holy Spirit assumed more decisively an ethical form. The epistles of St Paul enable us to see pretty clearly how this change came about. The first letter to the Corinthians, in chapters twelve to fourteen, is especially instructive on this point. When the apostle wrote his first extant letter to Corinth, the early supernatural gifts were in full vigour. Their manifestation occupied a large place in the communion of the Church. But their public exercise led to deplorable abuses, to emulation and morbid excitement. An exaggerated and false value was put upon these powers by many Christians. The apostle is therefore at pains to show that the extraordinary endowments of the Spirit are not his best gifts; they have a subordinate and transitory function. The things that "abide" and are really essential and great, are "faith, hope, love,"—and the greatest of them love! These three the Church afterwards styled "the theological virtues," which she prefixed to the four cardinal (moral) virtues distinguished in philosophy.

With this teaching addressed to the Corinthians we compare the ethics of the contemporary letter to the Galatians, in which St Paul describes with emphasis and fulness "the fruit of the Spirit." In what does that fruit consist? in miracles of healing, in mysterious "tongues," in prophecies, in the wisdom of the teacher and the authority of the ruler of men, in apostolic labours and writings? Yes, he would have said; all these are a fruit of the one

and self-same Spirit,[1] whose power works in ten thousand forms of divine mystery and beneficence. But no one of these, nor all of them together constitute *the* fruit of the Spirit, his specific, characteristic, and enduring product, the most precious and glorious issue of his indwelling. That consists of "love, joy, peace, longsuffering, goodness, kindness, faith, meekness, temperance." Homely, commonplace moralities these, the clever Corinthian or passionate Galatian would say; any ordinary dull person may excel in them! Ah! but it is just these quiet virtues of the common life that are in practice the most difficult, and the most vital to society. "The gospel," said Jesus, "is preached to the poor"—in its ethics no less than in its dogmas. It is for the poor—for ordinary, obscure, ungifted people, who are not brilliant, not forcible, not able to do great works for God, but who can love, who can be kind and humble and cheerful and self-controlled, who can win every blessing of Christ's beatitudes. And the clever and richly gifted and distinguished, the men who do the things that count for mighty works and prophesy in Christ's name, will find at the last the door of his kingdom shut against them, if they have wanted these simple and meek virtues, these vital fruits of the Spirit, and wanting them have "wrought iniquity"!

Whatever the Spirit of Christ may work in men in the ways of exterior demonstration—by powers of healing, by gifts of speech and intellectual display—his energy in the soul is always, and above all things, an ethical force, a power that makes for righteousness. For He is the *Holy* Spirit, and makes men holy. When men are "born of the

[1] See 1 Cor. xii. 1–11.

Spirit," it is an ethical transformation that we witness in them, a new birth of the soul itself. All else in his operations is subsidiary to that. He is the regenerator of the heart, the builder of character in the individual and in the community; He is the inspirer of everything morally beautiful and true, the shaping, educating Will in that kingdom of wills of which Christianity is the central domain. To be a child of God, a new creature in Christ Jesus, is to be, as Jesus says, "born of the Spirit." And whoever is thoroughly and genuinely good, from the heart, is so born, whether he can trace his spiritual birth and knows its divine Author or not. Every clean heart and right spirit is a creation of God. All vital goodness in men is of the Spirit of the omnipresent and all-loving Father.

In a word, the revelation of the Spirit is, morally considered, the revelation of *the power to do right.* We deduced from the doctrine of the Fatherhood of God the ethical principle of love to God, from the Incarnation of the Son the principle of faith in man; and now let us add as our chief inference from the doctrine of the Holy Ghost the grand belief of the Christian creed in the possibility of holiness, in the unlimited power to do right and to be good that is brought within the reach of all men by the gospel of Christ. The manifestation of the Father by Jesus Christ to men and his own participation with them in his incarnate life are made effectual by the impartation and indwelling of his Spirit, who operates as an omnipotent moral energy in the believing soul. The doctrine of God immanent within man seals and completes that of God revealed to man, and of God partaking with man. Listen

to St Paul as he bows his knees to pray to the Father, "that He would give you, according to the riches of his glory, with power to be made mighty through his Spirit entering the inner man"; as he gives thanks "to Him who is able to do far exceedingly beyond what we ask or think, according to his power which worketh in us!"[1] Who shall put a limit to the efficacy of the indwelling Spirit of the Almighty, or presume to say that there is any degree of moral renovation that He cannot accomplish in the soul that yields itself utterly to Him?

Here Christianity supplies the defect of all other moral systems. The theories of philosophers were in many respects most admirable and instructive; only they would not work. The machinery of the ethical being was well explained; its wheels and cranks and bearings were pointed out and placed in their adjustment; but there was no driving force,—no one to say, as Jesus to his apostles, "Ye shall receive power." At the very time that ethical science was most highly cultivated by the great teachers of Greece, the vices described in the first chapter of the epistle to the Romans flourished and the social system of paganism was falling into hopeless decay. The work of Aristotle and the Stoics has never been surpassed in skill of moral analysis and theoretical construction; but it was the pathology of morbid and moribund conditions. What St Paul says of the Jewish statutes and ordinances was equally true of the Greek intellectual systems: no law can "give life," or produce a real righteousness. The letter of the prescribed rule and the educated knowledge of moral truth alike work condemnation and wrath to the natural man. The one

[1] Eph. iii. 14-21.

effective power is that which he called, by a paradox, "the *law* of the *Spirit* of life in Christ Jesus." This sets men "free from the law of sin and death." The new principle of life in Christ through the Spirit has effected conspicuously, and on a most extensive scale, "that which the law," in whatever shape presented or formulated, "could not do, because it was weak through the flesh."[1]

Now this is the real miracle of Christianity. It actually "gives life"! It is a working scheme of moral renovation. It points to the first Christians of Corinth, some of whom had been stained by horrible and nameless vices, and to vast numbers of such men redeemed by it in every age, and it can say to them: "You were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God."[2] How this marvel is brought about, through what disclosures of the love and righteousness of the Father to guilty men, we have yet more distinctly to consider. Here we note the bare fact itself. Faith in the gospel of Christ links us to an almighty power. Through it there is brought to bear upon men a mysterious but immediate energy, which produces not unfrequently a sudden and complete change in their views and disposition toward God. It is the action of the Spirit of God, which encompasses us everywhere and moves every spirit open to his influence.

Christianity does not theorize, nor even directly legislate much about moral duties. It lays down few detailed rules of life. But it supplies a new spirit to life. Perhaps there is no precept, even in the Sermon on the Mount, which had not been previously delivered by some one or

[1] Gal. iii. 18–24; Rom. iv. 15, viii. 3. [2] 1 Cor. vi. 9–11.

other amongst the world's many masters. It is in the authority, the constructive power, the hope and resolution, the energy of personal will, the Spirit of holiness animating that divine discourse, that its great distinction is to be seen. The early Church accepted, on the whole rightly, the moral categories and heads of virtue drawn up by the Greek thinkers, as she took over the ethical code of Judaism perfected and purified by her divine Master. The order and proportion of the virtues was changed; the moral scenery of life, as one may say, was shifted, and the duties that touch immediately our relations to God were recast and deepened: but not even here was there anything brought in by the new faith that was absolutely novel and unprepared. It would be unjust to say, even in regard to heathenism, that filial love to God and loyal faith in man were absolutely wanting; unjust to say that humility, chastity, self-sacrifice, and the power of vicarious suffering were unknown to the Gentile conscience. The moral knowledge of paganism was defective and confused; still the heathen had knowledge, much of it highly advanced and skilfully systematized. It was scarcely possible that the human mind should have reached the splendid development which it attained amongst the Greeks without a considerable degree of moral earnestness and high notions of virtue. Socrates, the wisest of the Greeks and the leader of ethical research, had said, "Virtue is knowledge,"—an axiom false or true as you interpret it. Aristotle gave a safer definition when he laid it down that virtue lies in well-doing, that it is a habit of action and imports the fulfilment of one's proper function as a man. But these sagacious definitions condemned Greek life as a practical

failure. It decayed and perished, after fertilizing all times to come with its genius, for want of the elementary virtues, for lack of probity and purity. It was sensual, having not the Spirit. That ancient world has passed away, as St John foresaw, and "the lust thereof."[1] All else that makes man great the old civilization had acquired,—much that we have not yet recovered from its ruins; but it lacked "the Spirit of power and love and discipline"; it was unholy. There was moral insight without moral energy, the impotence of an ungodly, self-centred will.

2. With the gift of power conveyed by the Holy Spirit, there is placed side by side in the teaching of the New Testament the attribute of *freedom*. "Where the Spirit of the Lord is," cries the apostle Paul, "there is liberty." And he contrasts in glowing terms "the spirit of adoption" with the old "spirit of bondage" that gendered fear.[2]

There is a sense in which, of course, every man is free. Free will is another name for personality, for the rational man as a *causa sui*,—a being who, however limited physically, intellectually, or morally, is still within those limits a person and not a machine, choosing at every point of his action between alternatives lying before him and responsible for his choice. We are at the centre of our existence independent, and were so constituted by the Supreme Will who has made us each an image of Himself and lit our souls with a spark of his essence. Hence arises one chief form under which the enigma of life presents itself, the paradox of the co-existence of human liberty and divine

[1] 1 John ii. 15–17.

[2] Rom. viii. 15; 2 Cor. iii. 17; comp. Rom. vii. 14–23; John viii. 31–36.

sovereignty, or the mystery of a finite free will. Our independence is a relative independence, environed by the divine Will. The circle is constituted by its circumference, together with its centre. The communion of the Holy Ghost forms the sphere within which our will is designed to exist, finding in that pure effluence its medium of life and movement, as the bird finds it in the sun-lit atmosphere. In that divine element there is assigned to each created soul room and free play for its development, in harmony with the universe of holy wills. As Dr R. W. Dale somewhere writes: "In the spiritual, as in the material sphere, man is a free personality surrounded by a vast and immeasurable Power which is not his own."

We belong to a kingdom of God, to a vast system of personalities linked to each other in a thousand relations seen and unseen, to a realm of free, dependent wills, whose blessedness lies in obedience to the good and perfect will of God. Now such a kingdom implies some common diffused medium, a universal spirit and ethical power acting on all minds alike, that shall shape them to a common purpose, that shall assign and preserve to each its place in the ethical cosmos. Without such provision for order and loyalty, freedom is an empty name. Law is the guarantee of personal liberty; and law, as we have seen, must be impersonated in a living executive. Such an all-pervading force the Holy Spirit is, seen in the light in which Christianity reveals Him. "The kingdom of God is righteousness and peace and joy *in the Holy Ghost.*"[1] Those moral conditions exist *in* the Spirit,—within the range of his influence, and as they

[1] Rom. xiv. 17.

are generated by his action in the commonwealth of believing souls. Sin, which offends against the love of God the Father, transgresses the law of the Spirit of life that surrounds us, whose communion is the harmony of the world itself. It is rebellion against the kingdom of God set up in the Holy Ghost—a "vexing" of the Spirit that guides us and a "quenching" of his fire which animates us.[1] So sin becomes disease and feebleness within our nature, and confusion in the outward relations of life. Idle or foolish speech St Paul forbids[2] as particularly "grieving to the Holy Spirit," because it is a thing destructive to fellowship and tends to dissolve the ties that bind men together in the associations of spiritual life.

The adjustment of the personal will and reason to the needs of the community, and the conduct of the social evolution of the world, belong to the province of the Holy Spirit who dwells in humanity. The Church is the society in which his communion is explicitly realized and is to have its full and direct operation; the Church is called and destined to reorganize the human race in the fellowship of the Spirit of Christ. Freedom is secured to each by the order that is imposed on all; and the freedom of each is made spontaneously to subserve the advancement of all. The conflicting interests of the individual and society are reconciled in the kingdom of God, where the Spirit of Jesus Christ rules and works all things in all. His power is that which most quickens and incites the energies of the man, while at the same time it most completely subordinates them to the larger life of humanity.

The causes of our bondage are partly personal, partly social.

[1] Isa. lxiii. 7-14; 1 Thess. v. 19. [2] Eph. iv. 29, 30.

How true is that condemning word of Jesus, spoken to the Jews who boasted their freedom in spite of the galling yoke of Rome: "Whosoever committeth sin is the slave of sin"![1] We are bound by our own past, and by the past of our race. Errors and misdeeds once committed never leave us; nay, they pursue our children's children "unto the third and fourth generation." Our existence is mortgaged to our sins; they fasten themselves about our neck as a load of debt with accumulating interest, from which we have no hope to free ourselves, and that burdens and hampers us at every step. Our freedom of will becomes merely nominal, a forfeited right, a dead potentiality, a lapsed privilege; for we are so compromised by past transgressions, so shut in and held down by habit and circumstance, that our choice is limited practically to a choice of moral evils; the good that in our reason and conscience we long to do is out of our reach, and how to perform it we find not.[2] The knowledge of good mocks and tortures us, when only evil is within our power. "The law is spiritual," says the apostle, describing this stage in his own pre-Christian life: "but I am carnal, sold under sin.... I delight in the law of God after the inward man: but I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin that is in my members."[3] Now it is this yoke which

[1] John viii. 31–36.

[2] "*Ce lambeau de liberté*" (this rag of liberty) says Renan pathetically in his Recollections (*Souvenirs de l'Enfance et de la Jeunesse*, pp. 309, 310), wishing that men had either more freedom or none at all, that they were really masters of themselves or else irresponsible machines. The fact is that we have freedom enough to need and seek a divine Master; but no more,—till He bestows it. "Our wills are ours, to make them thine!'

[3] Rom. vii. 7–25.

is broken by the power of the Holy Spirit. This bondage He changes into the liberty of the sons of God. The law of the mind is sustained, the better spirit of the man is reinforced and carried to victory over the flesh by the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ. Nay, the man himself, as St Paul puts it in one place, is "transformed by the renewal of his mind."[1] The man is thus for the first time made an actually free man. He becomes a "new creature," a spiritual and not carnal man, whose inward nature, allied with God, has regained its just supremacy over outward life and the material organism. He is relieved from a hostile and crushing power, from that which was in reality the bondage of Satan exercised, under the show of freedom, through his corrupt and sinful flesh.

Freedom, then, is not bare independence,—the proud "autonomy" of a stoical, self-reliant will. It is the liberty of the sons of God, of those who dwell in their Father's house with a mind in harmony with his,—who have their own will and their own way, because it is the way of God. The Holy Spirit is the jealous guardian and educator of moral freedom. He does not overpower our will, nor force anything upon us. Notwithstanding his infinite and awful power, He acts on men by way of persuasion and friendly influence. He "joins his help to our weakness," as St Paul finely puts it.[2] He helps us so far as we wish and consent to it, in self-distrust seeking his aid and committing ourselves to his guidance. When our Lord at his departure introduced the Holy Spirit to

[1] Rom. xii. 2; comp. Rom. viii. 1–11 and Gal. v. 16–24, for St Paul's doctrine of the dominance of the spirit over the flesh assured by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

[2] Rom. viii. 26.

his disciples, it was under a title the most kindly and reassuring possible. He was to be "another Advocate," such as the Lord Himself had been, but acting invisibly and universally. He was "to take of the things" of Christ and "shew them" to his people, to "bring to their remembrance" what Jesus Himself had said. He was to "witness" to mankind, and to "convince the world" of its misjudgement and misdoing.

The manner of action thus described is natural and reasonable; it follows the lines of human intercourse, and depends on the intelligent communication of thought, on the operation of the normal laws of the mind and of social progress. Everything is gentle, orderly, and genial in the relations of this mysterious Paraclete, this mighty Third in the Godhead, to the followers of Christ. He is the Inmate of the heart—a "gentle, awful, holy Guest," the all-wise Adviser and Remembrancer. In his lowliness, He consents to be grieved by our folly, and even to be driven away by our persistent unbelief, because He is our friend. He unlooses our chains; He heals our wounds; He lifts us from the dust, that we may stand upon our feet and walk in liberty knowing ourselves as free men in God. He would have us with delight yield our bodies for his temple, and our souls to share eternally his communion in the love of Christ and the Father. The paradox of free will here assumes its finest form. Losing ourselves, we find ourselves. In surrender to the Spirit of God we win our liberty.

3. In the train of moral power and freedom there follows *joy*. "My joy," said Jesus on the night of his passion to his sorrowful disciples, "shall be in you; and your joy shall

be fulfilled." First of the fruits of the Spirit commended by St Paul to the Galatians is "love"; next comes "joy."

The New Testament is the happiest book in the world. The joy of the Holy Ghost was the most luminous feature of the Christian life in the early days of the Church. Peace dwelt in the heart of the first believers, gladness beamed from their countenance, exultation broke from their lips, joy danced in their very blood. "We glory in God through our Lord Jesus Christ," exclaims St Paul, to the world's eye a man of all men most miserable; "we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And not only so, but we exult in tribulation also."[1] In the earliest of his letters he points to this emotion as the first and surest proof of the true acceptance of the gospel of Christ by the Thessalonians: "You shewed yourselves imitators of us and of the Lord, having welcomed the word amidst much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost." The apostle Peter writes in the same strain to the scattered and suffering Christians of Asia Minor: "Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though vexed with manifold temptations: . . . believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory."[2] The overflowing gladness of the early Christians, their robust cheerfulness and indomitable patience, their power of extracting happiness out of the most unfavourable conditions,—all this was a moral phenomenon of a kind most astonishing, and even provoking, to the ancient world. Marcus Aurelius in his only extant reference to our religion, alludes to the readiness of the Christians to suffer, and puts it down to "sheer obstinacy"![3] This new temper of the Christians, thrown into bold relief by their

[1] Rom. v. 2–11. [2] 1 Pet. i. 6–8; iv. 12–19. [3] *Meditations* xi. 3.

persecutions, presented at the same time a strange and admonitory contrast to the gloom and despair which had settled upon men of earnest mind amongst their contemporaries, and to the "disgust and secret loathing" which, as Matthew Arnold well describes it, had fallen "on that hard Roman world."

How little does our joy depend on outward conditions! Its spring is in the spirit of each man. To one

> the meanest flower that blows can give
> Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears.

Another has wealth and culture and all life's natural boons, and cries, "Vanity of vanities!" The world wearies and palls upon him. He "travels from Dan to Beersheba, and cries, 'Tis all barren!" The jaundiced eye sees everything of its own colour. To Hamlet, with his piercing intellect and unstrung will and his conscience sickened by hideous wrong,

> this goodly frame, the earth, seems a sterile promontory; this most excellent canopy, the air, look you, this brave o'erhanging firmament, this majestical roof fretted with golden fire, why, it appeareth no other thing than a foul and pestilent congregation of vapours.

He exclaims

> How weary, stale, flat, and unprofitable
> Seem to me all the uses of this world!

He is a fortunate man who has not known such moods as this. Schopenhauer, the philosopher of German pessimism, with his ruthless hand tears the veil away from many of the sophistries of the popular utilitarianism. Sheer boredom and disgust at life are, in his view, the natural result of secular prosperity, the only possible outcome of that

general comfort and bodily ease and security which are the paradise of materialistic dreams.[1] He shows that with ordinary men, in proportion as they escape from absorbing toil and the excitement of the doubtful chase after a competence, life loses its interest and zest, it grows flat and insipid. Success means disillusion. The well-to-do worldly classes plunge into dissipation as a refuge from dulness — anything to break the stupid monotony of an unanxious, well-fed ease. Benevolence, from this point of view, is stultified equally with self-aggrandizement. It is as idle to seek the happiness of others as to cherish one's own, if this be all that it comes to,—if personal life has no intrinsic worth, if satisfaction ends in disgust and ease breeds *ennui*, and fulness of bread stimulates the vicious passions. We see no escape from this issue, upon secularist principles. Shorter hours of labour, kindlier physical conditions of life—who can help wishing for these boons, and giving his voice for any measure that will lighten the burden of care and toil for the multitude ? But it is absurd to suppose that material improvements will make men happier and more contented, apart from moral disposition and religious faith. Experience confutes this anticipation. Cheap bread and high wages will not go far to make a people happy. As Jesus said to the Tempter in the desert, " Man does not live by bread alone." In many a poor man's home to-day, as in many a time of distress and terror in the Church's history, the believing soul can say :

> Thou hast put gladness in my heart
> More than they have when their corn and their wine are increased !

[1] See his *Wisdom of Life*, translated by T. B. Saunders (Sonnenschein).

The dreariness of life, as it is lived by multitudes of people around us who have no crushing sense of poverty, is amongst the most distressing features of the age. The work by which they earn their bread does not employ their minds. They are the servants of machinery, repeating with mechanical routine the same operation a thousand times a day, and every day of the working year. There is no room for judgement and varied skill, no educating influence beyond that which comes of the discipline of steady labour, little natural or human interest of any kind in the industry of the bulk of our factory operatives. Massed in large towns and cities, they are removed from the wholesome refreshment of rural nature; their daily surroundings are unsightly, arid, joyless every way; foul vapours blot for them the greenness of the earth and the blue of the sky, and taint the sweetness of the air. Unless the soul is preoccupied by intellectual and moral interests, it falls into the snares of vice often out of sheer emptiness and the craving for relief from the barrenness of existence, out of the hunger for sensation. It is through vacancy of mind and the lack of healthier emotions that the populace of our great cities crowd to seek frivolous and worthless excitements. One cannot look at the cheap popular entertainments of the day and the current literature of amusement, without a feeling of deep compassion and very serious anxiety. To think that life should be so vapid, so stale and poor, that thousands upon thousands of our people have so little humour in themselves and so little concern in the world about them, that they find pleasure in the lowest diversions, and an added zest is given to their existence by such condiments as these! The extent and

character of the low literature circulated in our manufacturing towns, along with the rage for gambling and the passion for strong drink, are a signal index of the misery of the times. The life of the multitude is starved of happiness by the want of a spiritual faith; and their hunger is aggravated by the present conditions of social life and the methods of wholesale industrial production.

Joy is no object in itself. To seek it for the end of life is infallibly to lose it. Hedonism is a suicidal theory. Happiness is the accompaniment of the orderly working of our faculties seeking their proper end. It is the outcome and the index of health—in the mind or in the body, in the individual or the social organism. There is the joy of work itself, and there is the joy of attainment and success. Those who least think of it, who least study and plan for their own pleasure, but employ their powers in the fullest degree for the fittest aims, are the happy and joyous men. The child in the glad life of nature, free from self-seeking, whose every limb and sense dances with pure health, is the picture of happiness. We need, according to Christ's word, to be converted and become as little children. Then we shall recover the secret of joy. It lies in health of being, in harmony, in the measured play of all our energies, in the wholesome and ordered employment of our nature directed towards its appointed ends and sustained by a power adequate to their pursuit.

The true Christian has the finest and richest joy in human experience. He is at peace with God, and in harmony therefore with the real nature of things. His soul revolves round its just centre; it moves with the current of the almighty Will and purpose of the ages. He

is restored to inner health, and made master of himself. The passions that rent his heart have been tamed; they have found their master in the spirit of the man, now renewed by the Holy Spirit. The man has found his Master, and his vocation, in Christ Jesus. He has a grand, absorbing cause for which to labour and strive; it is the kingdom of God the Father, which includes the highest and completest good for the entire human race. The Spirit of God and of Christ, which fills his own breast, he sees filling the universal Church and working throughout the nations and the ages. With humble but sublime assurance he feels that he is, like the apostle Paul, a "worker together with God." And this is happiness,—harmony and full activity of soul, and fellowship with the Supreme Love and Truth in the pursuit of the highest good for all. This is our "joy in the Holy Ghost." Oh that we were worthier of it, and realized its bounding delight and energy! This was the joy and triumph of the early believers. It was the "joy set before Him," for which our Saviour "endured the cross, despising the shame."

The hope of heaven is a conspicuous element in Christian joy. And hope is an emotion that St Paul refers with emphasis to the influence of the Holy Spirit.[1] But it is a mistake to suppose that this expectation is the chief ground of the Christian man's happiness; nor have his hopes of heaven a selfish import. Heaven is to us no mere personal goal. It signifies the consummation of the kingdom of Christ; it is the home of the blessed children of our Father, the paradise of the just, the city of refuge for those who have been wronged and martyred by the evils of

[1] Rom. v. 5, xv. 13; Gal. v. 5; Eph. i. 13, 14, iv. 4.

not seem to lie there. The next age makes the controversies of the present obsolete, while the gospel evermore renews its strength. The upbuilding of the Christian life in humanity goes forward, little affected by mere logical contention, which is continually overlooking some essential factor of the case. The Spirit of truth silently carries on his deep work in the conscience, "convincing the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgement." An outpouring of the Holy Ghost, such as that which fell upon Germany in the Lutheran reformation, or on England in the Methodist revival of the last century, utterly confounds intellectual forecasts, and bears the world onward with an irresistible tide to the next destined stage of its progress.

Behind the evolution of society and the vaunted march of intellect there is hidden a divine power, whose force we cannot measure, whose movements no man can calculate or account for. The spring of the decisive events in the life of nations and the world, as in our individual experience, is deeper down than our intellectual knowledge. There is a Spirit of God in history. Rationalism, such as that of Buckle's *History of Civilization*, works upon the surface. Its explanations are plausible only for a moment. And the Spirit which works through the ages in the advance of mankind has set its seal upon Christianity, as upon no other factor in the world's making. It has allied and identified itself with the system of truth contained in the New Testament. From the doctrine of Christ again and again mighty impulses have been propagated, which have permeated our Western civilization and are spreading their influence through the whole race. Since the advent

of Christ and the day of Pentecost the world has marched steadily, if often slowly, forward. The spirit of humanity has been broadened and deepened in each successive age, as it has come into closer contact with the mind of Jesus Christ, and has been increasingly swayed by his Spirit.

Two forces within our time have appeared to be most threatening to the influence of the Christian religion; *viz.* physical science and historical criticism. With the former of these two the strain of conflict is already greatly relieved. Misunderstandings are passing away, the exaggerations of scientists and theologians are being corrected, and alliances between the former combatants are springing up in many directions. The exacter knowledge of the material world and the fuller command over it that the human mind has attained disclose more vividly than before the limits of our reasoned knowledge, while they open a vast and glorious province to the spirit of man. As "knowledge grows from more to more," we feel the need of a deeper reverence; religion is demanded as the complement of science, and faith becomes a more imperious necessity. Science is bound ultimately to render up its spoil in tribute to poetry and religion. The senses, with their most cunning instruments, are the servants of the spirit.

Criticism is the adversary that appears to many Christians most formidable at the present juncture. Historical research is subjecting the Christian books and the title-deeds of our creed, like other monuments of the past, to a jealous scrutiny. The enquiry, at this stage of the Church's history, is inevitable, and must be pursued with the integrity and exactness which do honour to the Spirit

of truth. Let it not be said that to search the Scriptures in this way is to set ourselves above them and pretend to be their judges. They come to us as witnesses of the most sacred and important of all truths; it is due to such witnesses that their credentials should be carefully examined in the light available, and their testimony sifted and weighed. But we cannot come to such an enquiry as persons indifferent and unprepossessed. The authority which these holy books have won, the fact that they have been the source and nourishment of the world's best life for more than a thousand years, that their sayings have possessed our hearts and turned the current of our life, have been our refuge in sorrow and our weapons in the conflict with temptation,—such experiences as these are evidence, so far as they go, to the divinity of Scripture; they are the indelible witness of the Spirit of truth within the Bible, who has burnt his signature into the conscience as by the fire of God. "He that believeth hath the witness in himself." And such a believer will not be overmuch troubled by obscurities of the traditional text or discrepancies in chronological figures, by the friction that arises in adjusting the framework of the Jewish history to the data derived from other sources, and the changes of view that take place in regard to matters of literary authorship and the order of development in doctrine, so long as the spiritual teachings of the Bible, the testimony of Jesus and the revelation of the Father remain to him. "He shall testify *of Me*," said Christ; "He shall take of mine and show it unto you": that is the supreme office of the Holy Ghost in Scripture and the Church; and it is being now fulfilled on a larger scale and

with richer fruit than in any age before our own. Let critics interpret the "sundry times and divers manners" as they will, the grand fact remains untouched, and it will emerge into more distinct and commanding light when naturalistic explanations have done their utmost: "God spake to the fathers in the prophets"; and "at the end of the days He spake to us in his Son."

In these days, when religious truth is sought on all hands with a thoroughness and industry never known in the history of the human mind before, we may rest assured that the Spirit of truth is preparing for Himself fresh victories. Let us honour Him by our candour and our courage, by a faith expectant and obedient to his guiding, who has new lessons to teach the Church in these new times and will "show" us "things to come,"[1] by a patient and self-distrusting faith that dreads to take forms and conventions and notions of our own, and opinions of the man or party, for the eternal truths of the kingdom of God.

Sincerity and truthfulness are a mark of the indwelling Spirit of truth. The truth that we believe, coming from the I AM and expressing the reality of things as that exists in God, reflects itself in the believing mind. It makes upright, conscientious, honourable men,—the image and glory of their Maker. Amongst the things which the apostle Paul enjoins on his beloved Philippians as those they are to "think of" and to "practise,"—the things they had "learnt and received and heard and seen" in himself, there come first "whatsoever things are true."[2] Jesus Christ stood before the Jewish people, before the bar of the

[1] John xvi. 13. [2] Phil. iv. 8, 9.

world at Pilate's tribunal, as "a man who has told us the truth that He heard from God," one who had been "born for this end, and for this end came into the world, that He might bear witness to the truth."[1] First of the glorious titles which the apostle John confers upon Him in the Apocalypse is that of "the faithful and true witness."[2] Here, once more, is our high example. "Every one who is of the truth," He said, "heareth my voice." And when pure and true-hearted men, unblinded by wilfulness and pride, sincere and striving for the light, yet in these confused and entangled times fail to see Him as the Way and the Truth, we should be slow to say that his Spirit is withheld from them; we should be eager to believe that they too are of "the other sheep, not of this fold," of whom He spoke once so tenderly to his Jewish disciples. When the mist lifts, they will see the Shepherd's face and discern whose hand has led them in paths that they knew not. Those who are of the truth, whatever differences of opinion and sentiment divide them now, and however fiercely they strive with each other in human blindness, are yet men of the Spirit; for there is but one all-loving and cherishing Spirit of truth, who

> doth prefer
> Before all temples the upright heart and pure.

5. The Lord Jesus has imparted the sum of divine blessing in the gift of the Holy Spirit from the Father. St Paul defines this as "the communion of the Holy Ghost." In this communion we are united with God and with man,—made one in spirit with the God-man.

Such communion involves and brings about a com-

[1] John viii. 40; xviii. 36–38. [2] Rev. i. 5, iii. 14.

munity of character. The Holy Spirit works according to his nature; He assimilates to Himself the soul in which He dwells. He sanctifies the believing man through the whole range of his existence. We spoke of holiness at first as the name for the character of God, for the infinite ethical perfectness of the Godhead. That holiness, if we may thus speak, constitutes God's right to the worship of moral beings, his sovereignty over the human conscience. In it lies also his claim to our imitation: "Because it is written, Ye shall be holy; for I am holy."[1] The character of God revealed to us in the Person of Christ, and by the Holy Spirit in Scripture and the conscience, compels our obedience and our imitation. In God, first the character existent, then the claim imposed: in man, first the divine claim admitted, then the character imparted.

Such is the order and method of our sanctification in Christ Jesus. The Christian is made like God by being devoted to Him. Led by the Spirit of Christ, we yield ourselves unto God; and in that yielding there is impressed more and more deeply on the obedient spirit the nature of God Himself. By the Holy Spirit God dwells in us, and not inactively; He "works in us to will and to work, in fulfilment of his good pleasure."[2] For us each it is his good pleasure that we should be like Himself. So the Holy Spirit guides and chides us, strives with us, comforts or reproves us, burns as a fire or shines as a light within us, seeking at every moment and in every act to perfect in us each, and in the body of the Church, the filial character. His end and mission is to fashion us into sons of God glorious in our Saviour's image.

[1] 1 Pet. i. 13–16. [2] Phil. ii. 13.

Holiness is the last, as it is the first word in the doctrine of the Trinity practically considered.

Thus far we have unfolded, with such skill as we could, the moral bearing and influence of the three great revelations of God to man which are combined in the Christian doctrine of the Trinity. We have found the ethical notes of these primary doctrines to consist in the new consciousness of love to God, of faith in man, and of power to do right, which they have formed in those who believed them. From these leading principles we have traced the most important and characteristic features of the Christian life that are connected with them. And we have endeavoured to show, so far as occasion allowed, how these several qualities of character are related, by difference or agreement, to those that have distinguished other ethical types, and how the Christian ideal gathers into itself the higher elements belonging to the moral conceptions and efforts of men who followed after righteousness under systems of belief and in tracks of thought alien to itself. Our argument has been governed by the axiom expressed by Jesus, "There is none good but one, that is God"; by the conviction that all goodness in man is derived from God, and that in ethics, as in religion and philosophy, GOD in very deed is all in all. He is the fountain of life; He is the substance of truth; He alone is love, is light, is strength for the children of men.

Now therefore unto God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, be ascribed, as is most justly due, all praise, majesty, might, and dominion, henceforth and for ever!

CHAPTER VI

THE SIN OF THE WORLD

Behold, the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world!
—St John the Baptist

The great doctrines relating to the Godhead considered in the previous chapters—the divine Fatherhood, the alliance of the Son of God with mankind, and the inhabitation of the Holy Spirit—are truths which concern our nature in its primary constitution and normal development, apart from the derangement which we call sin. As things are, it is impossible so to apprehend and expound them. Sin thrusts itself between us and the Godhead, and throws its hateful shadow everywhere over our theories and discussions, as it does over our practical affairs. To ask what our relations to the Father, Son, and Spirit might have been without the fall, is, alas! a speculative question, one to which experience has no answer to give. In our previous reflexions upon the moral bearings of the Christian revelation of God, we could not ignore the existence of this disturbing fact; at each point we felt how darkened and difficult has become the intercourse between our race and its Creator.

But it is time for us now to look this monstrous evil in the face. We must enquire what the pronouncement of Christianity is upon man's lapse from God, and how it

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deals with the calamities into which this lapse has plunged him. For this, as we well know, is the main matter of the gospel of Christ. It claims to be good news for *sinners*. To guilty, broken, miserable men all over the world it brings the message: "To you God, having raised up his servant Jesus, sent Him to bless you, in turning every one of you away from your iniquities." The Christian gospel is the truth about sin and salvation; the sacrifice of the cross is the fact upon which that truth is based. Here we reach the centre and heart of our subject. If Christian ethics are, as we have said, the ethics of the Fatherhood of God, of the divine Incarnation, of life in the Spirit, they are still more distinctively the ethics of redemption by Jesus Christ, —*the ethics of the cross*. The Christian moralist may say with as good right as the theologian and the evangelist, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world hath been crucified to me, and I unto the world!" To that cause the apostle Paul referred the transformation of his life and character, his changed view of the world and his changed relations to it; and from the same source has proceeded the ethical regeneration to which everything hopeful and progressive in our civilization appears, directly or indirectly, to be due.

Man, we have assumed, is essentially the child of God. It was from heathen poets that St Paul quoted his maxim, "We are his offspring." We were made in the eternal Father's image, made for fellowship with the Son of his love, made for the occupation of his Spirit. Formed for these divine ends, to miss them is our ruin. To want the Spirit of God for the vitalizing and controlling element

within our being, is to want the principle of inward health, vigour, order, joy, and beauty. Hence the diseases with which individual character and society are rife. Moral evil thus regarded, and realized in its true import as an aberration from God, is *sin*. When the conscience is thoroughly awakened, its remorse naturally takes this form; and the man, whatever wrong he has done to himself or to society, cries out to his Maker, "Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight." Sin is rebellion, sin is sacrilege. It is disorder committed against the nature of things, against the law of the universe, which expresses the holy will and nature of almighty God. And its end is according to its works: "Sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death."[1] And that death which is the wages and fruit of sin, whatever else of penalty and anguish it signifies, imports separation from God; it means the soul's disinheritance, its expulsion from the society of Christ, who to some will utter those most dreadful words, "Depart from Me, ye cursed!"[2] its total loss of that native sonship to God, which its disobedience has suspended and forfeited, but not utterly cancelled while redemption is possible and this judgement remains unpronounced. In the expression "alienated from the life of God"[3] the apostle Paul sums up the moral state of the pagan world of his time,—its uncleanness, its falsity, its cruelty, as well as its irreligion; and the same sentence which defines the guilt of sin pronounces its ultimate doom.

This alienation from God, this aversion from our heavenly Father causing the perversion of our whole nature, is pre-

[1] James i. 15: ἀποκυεῖ θάνατον. [2] Matt. xxv. 41–46.
[3] Eph. iv. 17–19: comp. Rom. i. 18–25, 28; John xvii. 3, 25.

valent in the human race. No man except Jesus Christ has been altogether free from this fatal bias—from the twist in the conscience, the taint in the blood, the malformation of the will that we call "original sin." Its symptoms confront us in society, in history, in our private and family life. The disease is congenital, and has the force of an unbroken heredity behind it; it has become second nature to us. It affects the frame of the external world, poisoning our environment and bringing the entire human creation into the bondage of corruption. In our unregenerate state we live under "the law of sin and death." To multitudes of men it is as common to sin against God as to eat and drink, as obvious and ordinary a thing to commit moral offence as to breathe the air.

All the while there is a deep protest and opposition going on within the breast of the offender, a protest that in very few men, and only after long resistance, is silenced; but the protestation is for the most part ineffective. "I find then the law," says the apostle Paul—and he speaks for us all—"that when I would do good, evil is present with me. . . . I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members."[1] By a terrible paradox, it becomes the law of human life to do what the law forbids. The abnormal constitutes itself the normal. Sin has fashioned itself into a sort of inverted order and dominion; it sets up its maxims, usages, social rewards and penalties, its appearance of precedent and right; and there exists a kingdom of Satan amongst men antagonistic to the kingdom of God, a realm of antichrist

[1] Rom. vii. 21-25.

that caricatures the reign of Christ. So the story of the world has become a long tale of war and slaughter; the struggle of flesh and spirit in the man has objectified itself in the battlefield of history.[1] Our moral consciousness is an arena of strife and suffering, and ethics is a science of the necessary but impossible.

We cannot conceive that a good and wise Being of almighty power would consent to the continued existence of a race and a world like ours, unless He had some plan for its improvement, unless there were some remedy in reserve, some atonement preparing that should bring to an end our alienation from Himself. The gospel is the disclosure of such a plan,—God's "purpose of the ages," as St Paul describes it. Mr Huxley, writing in his later and sadder mood of the state and outlook of society, has declared, "that if there is no hope of a large improvement of the condition of the greater part of the human family, . . . he would hail the advent of some kindly comet, which should sweep the whole affair away, as a desirable consummation."[2] We apprehend that the wish for this intervention might have been uttered by a sympathetic observer with even greater emphasis at any former period of human history since man fell into sin. We sorrowfully acknowledge with Mr Huxley that the world is, and always has been so far back as knowledge goes, burdened with a vast sum of wretchedness and suffering, and that its condition, taken generally, must appear deplorable indeed to any benevolent intelligence concerned for its happiness. We may also agree with him in admitting that the palliatives and plans of

[1] See James iv. 1, 2; Gal. iv. 29, 30; Rev. xix. 11–16, etc.

[2] *Nineteenth Century*, May, 1890, pp. 862, 863.

relief which men originate for themselves, now as in former epochs, fall lamentably short of their intention, and that it is quite possible for us to apply to our "social diseases worse remedies" and to aggravate matters instead of amending them by our blundering experiments.

The roots of the mischief lie beneath political and economical conditions, in the conscience of the individual man. The malady is internal and organic. Human greed, pride, and lust will ruin the most perfect social economy; a civil constitution framed by the united wisdom of men and angels would go wrong in a single week, administered by vicious hands. All this, of course, is no argument against wise reforms. Improve the environment as much as ever you can, provided you improve the man at the same time. Otherwise your labour is utterly thrown away. The soul, in the long run, makes its own conditions. The bad man creates the evil surroundings; these react upon him and he on them (as the mathematicians say) *ad infinitum*; and the result of this ever growing aggravation of sin is witnessed in the slums of our great commercial capitals, the ulcers of the body politic, the sink of the iniquities of all countries and generations past.

Now the Christian revelation testifies that the Ruler of the universe is infinitely concerned at the apostasy of mankind. The corruption of the human heart and the physical and social misery ensuing therefrom have profoundly touched the mind of Almighty God. To this effect we read in the bold and simple language of the first book of Scripture, relating to the antediluvian world: "Jehovah saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was

only evil continually. And it repented Jehovah that He had made man upon the earth, and it grieved Him at his heart."[1] At that crisis, the sacred history informs us, the human family barely escaped extinction. One would suppose, from the narrative of Genesis, that if salvation had not been possible and already contemplated, the race whose story is related would then and there have had its existence terminated. But the ark of salvation floated on the waters, the bow of promise was seen in the cloud. "And God spake unto Noah, and to his sons with him, saying, And I, behold, I establish my covenant with you, and with your seed after you."[2] What that covenant meant remained to be seen; the revelations given to Abraham, to Moses, to Jesus Christ and his apostles, unfolded its hidden purport. That the destruction of the flood should not be repeated was the negative article of God's covenant; this assurance encouraged the rescued family to resume their life on the earth. At the back of this memorable transaction lay the original pledge given to the sad mother of mankind: "The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head." With the entrance of sin and death, remedial grace visited mankind; the hope of salvation dawned on the race as it left the paradise of its natal innocence, and our first parents received their gospel bound up with the hard law of labour and sorrow. The older dispensations were a running prophecy of Christ. Revelation, as it is recorded in the Jewish Bible, consists in great part of the series of tokens, pledges, and personal engagements on the part of God towards his people, centring in the one grand purpose of the deliverance of mankind

[1] Gen. vi. 5–8. [2] Gen. ix. 8–17.

from sin,—signs and promises which are discovered, as we follow them, to converge upon Christ and Calvary.

Man's deliverance from sin was not to be effected in a moment, by a fiat of the Almighty, or by some magical and unaccountable charm. It is an ethical process, a task of righteousness and love, an inner regeneration carrying with it man's own consent and co-operation at each point. It is a work of grace, not of force. It must enlist the conscience and will in its undertaking, or it is no real reconciliation. If man's spiritual powers are not engaged in his redemption, if he is dealt with and provided for from the outside, by the mere will and action of another, he is not saved at all; the soul which makes him man would be virtually destroyed by such salvation. From the outset the appeal of revelation is, Work out your own salvation, for God worketh in you to will and to work. "Since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead." [1] By man sin: then by man salvation. Man must be a partner with God in his redemption. We can understand, therefore, that deliverance from sin proved to be a slow and educative operation, a labour of divine patience as well as power. God's compassions, no less than his anger, restrained themselves to accomplish more surely their purpose,—so that "once for all, in the end of the world," they might "put away sin." [2]

A long preparation was necessary and many conditions had to be fulfilled, before the Lamb of God should come to take away the sin of the world. Chief of those conditions, as the apostle Paul teaches us at large, was the necessity that men should *know their sin.* He shows that the course

[1] 1 Cor. xv. 21. [2] Heb. ix. 26–28.

of training the Jewish people had received under the discipline of the law of Moses and the prophets, was directed to this end. "Through law," he says, "cometh the full knowledge of sin."[1] We can trace, in fact, throughout the Old Testament an increasing moral sensitiveness, a conviction of sin that becomes more acute and painful as the manifestation of God's holiness grows more distinct, a deepening sense in Israel of the hatefulness of evil. It comes to be felt that moral transgression is a personal affront to God. Its loathsomeness in his sight, its defilement disqualifying the man for God's service and making him tremble and cower in God's presence, are realized by the Hebrew conscience with piercing vividness. Take, for instance, the confession of Isaiah in the temple, made at the time of his call to the prophetic office: "Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, Jehovah of hosts"; or the protest of Jehovah by the prophet Jeremiah: "I sent unto you all my servants the prophets, rising up early and sending them, saying, Oh, do not this abominable thing that I hate!" These sayings suffice to indicate how strictly ethical the religious training of Israel had been, and how the clearer knowledge of a personal and holy God brought with it a clearer vision of sin in its vileness and criminality. If the Old Scriptures reveal, as we said at the beginning, the character of God in his holiness, they reveal equally, and by that very fact, the character of man in his guilt.

[1] Rom. iii. 20 (ἐπί-γνωσις ἁμαρτίας), vii. 7–13; Gal. iii. 19–22; 1 Cor. xv. 56.

It appears further, from the explanations of the epistle to the Hebrews, which sums up the experience upon this point of centuries of devout worship in Israel, that the ritual of the Jewish religion, and the very sacrifices appointed to atone for transgression, contributed to this condemning effect. As the conscience deepened and the sense of guilt became more serious, it was felt that it was utterly impossible for "the blood of bulls and of goats" to "take away sins." Nay, it came to be perceived by the more spiritual that in these sacrifices, considered by themselves, "there took place," not an abolition, but rather "a remembrance of sins every year."[1] The numerous priestly atonements of pre-Christian religions did not satisfy, but quickened and deepened, while they expressed, the instinctive need which religious men everywhere felt for a sacrificial reconciliation with God. The Jewish and Gentile altars smoking in all lands declared the universal and inappeasable need of a sacrifice for sin.

Moreover, we can see that outside of Judaism, in the development of the natural religions, in the teaching of the sages of antiquity and the discipline of history, important additions were made to the knowledge of sin and righteousness. A humbling sense of moral failure and a longing for redemption were elicited, which prepared the world for its Redeemer. No earlier Gentile people had attained a degree of ethical perception equal to that which distinguished the cultivated Greeks at this fulness of the times, nor read so clearly the law written in the human heart. Nor had the world ever previously fallen into such debasement, into a state of wickedness so deeply dyed and

[1] Heb. x. 1–18.

conscious. The first two chapters of the epistle to the Romans truthfully depict the moral aspects of life at this epoch. Josephus writing of his Jewish compatriots, and Seneca, Tacitus, and Juvenal describing their Roman contemporaries, fully sustain the impeachment of the Christian apostle. Critical historians of various schools of our own time record a similar verdict. Mommsen writes in his *History of Rome*:[1]

> It is a dreadful scene, this picture of Rome under the oligarchy. There was nothing to bridge over or soften the fatal contrast between the world of the beggars and the world of the rich. . . . The wider the chasm by which these two worlds were divided, so much the more they coincided in the like annihilation of family life (which is the germ and core of all nationality), in the like laziness and luxury. . . . Riches and misery in close league drove the Italians out of Italy, and filled the peninsula partly with swarms of slaves, partly with an awful silence. . . . As rivers glisten in different colours, but a common sewer everywhere shows like itself, so the Italy of the Ciceronian epoch resembles the Hellas of Polybius, and still more decidedly the Carthage of Hannibal's time. . . . All the arrant sins that capital has been guilty of against patriotism and civilization in the modern world, remain as far inferior to the abominations of the ancient capitalist states as the free man, be he ever so poor, is superior to the slave.

Mr Froude, in his monograph on *Cæsar*, goes so far as to say: "The Roman people had ceased to believe: the spiritual quality was gone out of them; and the higher society of Rome was simply one of powerful animals." Merivale, in his *History of the Romans under the Empire*,[2] referring to the court of the emperor Claudius, in whose reign St Paul taught at Corinth, observes:

[1] Book v. 11, pp. 520, 521 [Eng. transl.]. Mommsen refers to the time of Julius Cæsar, but admits that the imperial administration made little substantial improvement.

[2] Vol. vi, p. 153 (ed. 1865).

We seem, indeed, in pursuing the narrative before us, to be weltering in a dream of horrors, which nevertheless exerts over us a kind of fascination, and however we may pause at intervals to question the phantasms they present to us, forbids us to shake off our constrained assent to their reality.

Renan testifies,[1] that "in Rome every vice flaunted itself with revolting cynicism," and that "the public games, especially, had introduced a frightful corruption." Again he writes:

To the eyes of Nero the world took the form of a horrible comedy, with himself as chief actor in it. He had killed nearly all his relations. He had made the most shameful follies the common fashion. A large part of Roman society, following his example, had descended to the lowest level of debasement. The cruelty of the ancient world had reached its consummation.

And Mr Lecky, the historian of *European Morals*, points to the pages of the Latin Suetonius as "an eternal witness of the abysses of depravity, the hideous and intolerable cruelty, the hitherto unimagined extravagances of nameless lust, that were then manifested on the Palatine," the palace of the Cæsars. He speaks of "the fierce outburst of ungovernable and almost frantic depravity which marks this period."[2] Dr Storrs sums up in the following words:

The people were simply on fire of hell, with all lust for whatsoever would gratify an insatiable craving for viciousness and for blood; while the character of the emperors was such often that the dreadful words in which Tacitus sums up the spirit of their reigns from Nero forward are the truest picture, *Virtue was a sentence of death.*[3]

[1] Hibbert Lectures: *The Influence of Rome on Christianity*, p. 23; and *L'Antechrist*, pp. i, ii, 1, 2.

[2] *History of European Morals*, vol. i, p. 276; vol. ii, pp. 320, 321.

[3] *The Divine Origin of Christianity*, by R. S. Storrs, D.D., p. 262. Several of the citations above given are borrowed from this eloquent and learned transatlantic work.

How deeply the feeling of humanity was wanting in these times may be judged from the fact that through all the flourishing age of Rome the gladiatorial shows and combats of men with wild beasts, exhibited upon a vast scale and with boundless expense, and resorted to by both sexes, were the one great popular recreation which was pursued with passionate delight in the provincial cities as well as in the Colosseum at Rome. Ovid adds a crowning touch of horror to these ghastly spectacles by his poetical instructions to the gallants of Rome for carrying on their amours during the celebration. Dr Martineau comes to the following conclusion, in comparing the evils of the age preceding Christianity with subsequent eras of depravity:

> However monstrous the crimes into which ecclesiastical passions betray men, they are after all less revolting than the loathsome depravities of periods lost to all restraints of reverence; and even the Papacy of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries appears innocent, in comparison with the government of Asia and Greece under Alexander's successors, and of the empire during the decline of Rome.

There were upright men in Rome during these evil days. Vergil stands out on this lurid background a figure as pure and tender as he is lofty in genius. Plutarch exhibits to us the better side of private and social life in the later times of ancient Greece; but the general features of the age were morally dark in the extreme, and its main currents ran swiftly towards destruction.

When the corruption of particular periods and circles of society within Christian times is censured, as in some instances it cannot be too severely censured, it must be remembered that the classical paganism had come first, and has breathed its influence for good and evil over all

subsequent human culture. The classical Renaissance and the Humanism of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries were marked by a recrudescence of heathen vice, which throws a dark shadow on the glory of that splendid age. From the so called Illumination of the eighteenth century has proceeded, along with many powerful scientific and philosophical impulses, a development of Neopaganism, which has eaten very deeply into modern art and literature. Goethe lent to it much of the influence of his rich and luminous genius. Under the names of æstheticism and naturalism this tendency has sought to ally itself with the scientific spirit—an alliance which cannot last, for science has a stern judgement in store for lawlessness. Christianity and the supernatural it dismisses as obsolete; sin is to it a bugbear of the priest; nature is innocent and holy; instinct the highest law; and the sensuous cravings need but freedom and culture to ennoble them.

Under the auspices of this system of thought there has been produced, especially in France, a type of literature which has not been equalled since the Greek decadence for intellectual brilliancy and moral putrescence, for external charm devoid of the elements of intrinsic human worth.[1] The French novel has become a byword in Europe, a synonym for specious immorality. Foul things are tricked out with fine language; and scenes and sentiments nauseous enough to sicken the coarsest ruffian appear

[1] There are, however, signs of a healthier spiritual current setting in amongst the younger thinkers and writers of France. The gay scepticism of Renan (that *Voltaire sucré*, as some one calls him), and the fleshly "realism" of Zola and his like, are losing their ascendency. See in evidence of this reaction E. Rod, *Les Idées Morales du temps présent*; E. Lavisse, *La génération de* 1890; and especially C. Wagner, *Jeunesse*. We

served up for dainty readers, flavoured with the sauce of a piquant wit and dressed with the skill of the finished literary artist. In the literature of the naturalistic revolt there is now observed a hysterical and neurotic strain, not confined to France alone, which is a new and alarming symptom in human thought, a sign of advanced moral disease. How far the influence of pagan models is responsible for these reactions against Christian morals it may be difficult to judge. But one who has been a student and lover of the Greek and Roman classics all his life may be permitted to say that he sometimes questions whether it would not have been for the health of mankind if the barbarians had destroyed root and branch the pagan literature, and cut down once for all that tree of the knowledge of good and evil: so powerful is the contagion that is conveyed by certain parts of it, so subtle and enervating the poison that is there bred by the union of sensualism and wit, by the artistic glorification of vice. The impurity that stains the classical pages is a most serious drawback to their use in Christian education.

Men of genius incur a terrible responsibility when they play with the human passions; and heavy is the retribution that will fall on poets and artists who have made their God-given imagination "procuress to the lords of hell."

At the era of the coming of Christ, with Tiberius Cæsar for master of the civilized world, the wickedness of man-

owe to M. Wagner's brilliant and most refreshing book (p. 208) the following sentence, quoted by him from Lavisse: "Une des marques de la jeunesse d'anjourd'hui, j'entends de celle qui pense, est *la nostalgie du divin*." This is the best news we have heard for a long time. Scarcely any event could be of better omen to Europe and to civilization for the next century than a thorough ethical revival in France.

kind appears to have culminated and the moral condition of our race was desperate. Satan was styled by St Paul "the god of this world"; and the Tempter of souls, not without a show of reason, vaunted himself before the Holy One of God, as he pointed to "the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them," saying of all, "It hath been delivered unto me, and to whomsoever I will I give it!" Assyrian conquerors had shown a cruelty more savage, as it was less calculating than that of Rome, and Egyptian and Babylonian courts had revelled in luxurious vice; what made the state of the ruling classes of the empire so frightful and hopeless was the union of depravity and culture, the unlimited mental and material resources which were devoted to their saturnalia of bloodshed and debauchery.

It is the intellectual perfectness of the classical civilization which gives to this age its peculiar horror. Art and philosophy have done their utmost for the generation to which these men belonged; naturalistic culture has attained its maximum. And this is the result! The world appears to be ruled by a succession of demons. The knowledge and power which its masters possess only serve to make them more exquisitely and magnificently wicked. The apostle Paul explains the situation in a word when he says, "The world by wisdom knew not God." It knew not God,—but it had sounded the depths of Satan. "By the law," he had said, referring to his Jewish experience, "is the knowledge of sin." This was true, in another sense, of contemporary paganism. The wisdom of Greece, the victories of Rome, the most splendid historical achievements of human genius and power, had for their net ethical result *the knowledge of sin*, the evolution of the possibilities of

human wickedness; they serve to discover in its farthest reaches what our nature is capable of in the way of moral corruption. Such was "the sin of the world" which the Lamb of God was called to take away.

> O man, strange composite of heaven and earth!
> Majesty dwarfed to baseness! fragrant flower
> Turning to poisonous seed! and seeming worth
> Cloking corruption! weakness mastering power!
> Who never art so near to crime and shame
> As when thou hast achieved some deed of name!

From this humiliating scene we turn to the cross of Jesus Christ,—to see these possibilities exceeded, and these frightful aberrations of the human heart explained in the death of the Son of God. The crucifixion of Jesus Christ is a stupendous moral phenomenon, the most significant and momentous event in the history of this world. Any system of ethics that leaves it out of account, or gives to it a secondary place in the life of mankind, is unhistorical and scientifically invalid. The death of Jesus is the crisis of history, the point of division between the old world and the new. It is the consummation of the past and the foundation of the future, the act in which humanity at once condemned itself and was redeemed by the love of God. The most awful and tragic crime, and the most adorable and heavenly virtue confront each other: sin in its utter turpitude, salvation in its triumph.

CHAPTER VII

THE EXPIATION OF THE CROSS

Christ once died for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God.—St Peter

We will not attempt with any show of words to set forth the excellency of the knowledge of Christ crucified. Let us plainly and earnestly consider, as we behold the strange sight, so much as in our brief survey we can gather of its import for human life and conduct.

1. And first we must observe, from the standpoint reached in the previous chapter, that the cross of Jesus Christ reveals *the sinfulness of sin.*

As the Lamb of God appears in his poor stripped body, torn with the scourge, bruised with buffeting, defiled by spitting, crowned with thorns, fastened with pierced hands and feet to the torturing cross, exposed to the jesting multitude, crushed with anguish and ignominy—whose shame is all that? whose disgrace is it that covers Him? Is it his own? or is it *ours*?—Think! they were men who did this thing, Herod and Pilate and the people of the Jews—not monsters, not fiends—men of like passions with ourselves. Each of us, on a close scrutiny, will have detected at one time or other something of them in himself. There was nothing in all they did which was accidental, nothing that might not well be foreseen by any one who knew the

world and knew that the Holy One of God was venturing Himself into it. You trace in the betrayers and murderers of our Lord the passions and resentments of our average nature, operating under the conditions of the time and the occasion.

As we first looked on the incarnate Son, the image of the Eternal manifest in human form, we exclaimed with exultation, "And we too are men!" But now what shall we say, when the same Lord of glory is slain by the hands of men, with the soldiers raffling for his garments and the passers by wagging their heads, and the rulers of Israel gathered to scoff at his agonies? Witnessing all this, how it cuts us to the heart to say, And we too are men! The putting to death of the Lord Jesus was a human and characteristic act. It was the fit outcome of the carnal mind which is enmity against God. Sin is not a mere deprivation, a passive and indifferent alienation from the life of God; it is a radical antipathy to God. "They have both seen and hated both Me and my Father," said Jesus of his Jewish rejecters. It was simply the bad element in human nature that did this deed. Sin, when the opportunity came, rose up to strike with malignant hand at the very life of God incarnate in his Son. Mad with sinful passion, men would annihilate God Himself, if that were possible, and tear heaven down as in the fable of the ancient Titans, that there might be none to question or punish their lusts. The scene of Golgotha is the exposure of the wickedness of our race. It discloses the real intent and scope of the evil that is in us,—what sin means and whither it tends. "If I had not come and spoken unto them," said Jesus, "they had not had sin: but now they

have no cloak for their sin."[1] The death of Jesus Christ tears the mask from the face of sin. Sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death: it brought forth this death!

And so from this epoch there dates in the history of ethics a new humility, a spirit of contrition in its intensity and contagious force quite unknown hitherto. Remorse shook the consciences of men. As the gospel made its way in the Roman empire, and that empire at the same time fell slowly, grand even in its ruins, under the terrific judgements of God, the cry of penitence and wailing was heard from shore to shore. Men and women in vast multitudes hurried to the wilderness; everywhere in the track of the missionaries of the cross monasteries sprang up, and were crowded with the noblest and best of the converted peoples. Life became a long penance; and austerities of the most extreme and unheard of kind were multiplied in the passionate though ill-taught desire of the penitents to follow the Crucified, and to make amends for their own sin and for the sins of the world they were forsaking. Ever was there shining before their eyes the image of the outraged, patient, divine Sufferer; ever in their souls glowed abhorrence of that world which had scorned and crucified Him. Ah! it had crucified itself in doing that!

"When the Spirit of truth is come," said Jesus in prospect of his death, "He shall convince the world of sin, because they believe not on Me."[2] It was in this point that the guilt of the ancient ages centred. The new world has condemned the old for its treatment of Jesus Christ; and the vice and ungodliness of the pagan civilization and the Jewish legalism were stricken irrecoverably by that

[1] John xv. 21–25. [2] John xvi. 7–11.

sentence. The prophecy of Jesus has been fulfilled, and must be again fulfilled in a larger sense. The Jewish people, with all the multitude of the tribes of man, will be brought to "look on Him they have pierced, and mourn." The family of mankind must acknowledge that it has played the prodigal and wickedly estranged itself from God; and that its crime of unbelief has brought shame and death on its Well-beloved, the Prince and Lord of life, the Firstborn of creation, the Only-begotten of the Father. The attitude of men towards Christ showed what they themselves were. His death reveals with awful evidence the enmity to God which is at the bottom of our wrong-doing. It proves the evil of the world to be, in its essence, not ignorance, nor misfortune, nor natural passion, nor bad environment—but *sin*. "I know you," said Jesus to those who condemned Him, the best informed and most respected religious men of their day,—"that you have not the love of God in yourselves."

2. While the cross of Jesus Christ displays the enormity and malignity of human sin, it reveals in contrast therewith the nature of *the divine righteousness*, which abolishes that sin.

Christ's mission bore from the beginning a sacrificial and expiatory character. His death was never contemplated by Himself or his apostles in any other light. The first utterance which proclaimed Him to the world announced Him as "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." He interpreted his approaching death in this light, and sought thus to reconcile his disciples to it: "The Son of man," said He, "came not to be ministered to, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many"; and

again, at the table of the Last Supper: "My blood is shed for you and for many, for the remission of sins."[1] The apostolic doctrine of the propitiatory atonement, taught by SS. Paul and John and in the epistle to the Hebrews, is nothing else than the expansion and interpretation by the aid of Old Testament conceptions of these sayings of Jesus in the Gospels.

In order that the act of Jesus Christ in dying for men might avail to efface their sins, it must of course have had a supremely righteous and worthy character in itself. It was an act intrinsically pleasing to God, and that in the highest degree. "Therefore doth the Father love Me," says Jesus, speaking of Himself as "the good Shepherd" who "lays down his life for the sheep."[2] The apostle Paul signalizes the incomparable moral worth of Christ's self-devotion by describing it as the "one act of righteousness" which redounded "unto all men for justification," and again as "an odour of sweet smell."[3] Similarly, the apostle John points to our "Advocate with the Father," as "Jesus Christ the righteous"; "and He," the apostle exclaims, "is the propitiation for our sins, and for the whole world."[4] Our Redeemer, in what He has done, affords perfect satisfaction on behalf of his most unsatisfactory human brethren. And by what sort of an act? If we know this, we shall have some clew to the nature of the divine law for men; we shall see what spirit and temper and line of behaviour most accord with the righteousness of God, and count for righteousness in his sight.

Listen again to the words which are put by the writer

[1] Matt. xx. 28, xxvi. 28.
[2] John x. 11, 17.
[3] Rom. v. 18; Eph. v. 2.
[4] 1 John ii. 1, 2.

of the epistle to the Hebrews into the lips of Christ as He advances to the cross,—words so uttered possibly by our Lord Himself:[1]

> Sacrifice and offering Thou wouldest not,
> But a body didst Thou prepare for Me;
> In whole burnt-offerings and sacrifices for sin Thou hadst no pleasure:
> Then said I, Lo, I am come . . .
> To do Thy will, O God.

The true righteousness then—that which makes amends for our unrighteousness—is the action of a Son who, in doing right, fulfils the behest of the Father, to whom it is one and the same thing to keep the law and to do the will of God; one who does that will and observes that law, therefore, with a free and perfect heart. Jesus Christ bowed to no abstract duty, to no impersonal law or blind, inexorable fate, but to the holy will of the Almighty and the All-good. "The cup which my Father hath given Me, shall I not drink it?" this was the question, put to Himself, that stilled the remonstrances of his human flesh and nerved his weakness for endurance. "Thy law," He could say to the Father, "is within my heart." In this *filial will*, we are taught, lay the unique quality and redeeming virtue of the sacrifice of Jesus. Not like the herd of animal victims, unknowing, unconsenting, but with full

[1] The Gospels are a very fragmentary though sufficient record of the history of our Lord (John xxi. 25). It is reasonable to look for additional echoes and reminiscences of his sayings in the other New Testament books. Such a reminiscence is explicitly given us in Acts xx. 35. The affecting words of Hebrews v. 7, which are inapplicable to the agony in the garden, appear to refer to some incident of the passion otherwise unrecorded. I venture reverently to suggest that the sayings of the Old Testament ascribed to Jesus in this epistle—in chaps. ii. 12, 13 and x. 5—were remembered to have been so used by Him. Comp. Luke xxiv. 27.

intelligence and intention—with a conscience that embraced the demands of God's law in all its necessity and significance —"through his eternal spirit, He offered Himself without spot to God." "In the which will," the same writer continues, "we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all."[1] For that wide heart of Jesus, that mighty divine-human will and brotherly mind which constituted his eternal spirit, carried us all with it, anticipating our endorsement of his act, and identified itself at once with the just demand of God in his law and with the duty of man in his helplessness and sin, when it offered through his bodily death the sacrifice which both imposed upon Him. He alone could perfectly understand, and perfectly acquiesce in, that which God required from compassionated but guilty man in order to forgiveness. When He said in Gethsemane, "Not my will, but thine be done," our Representative did so acquiesce, seeing with absolute clearness all that the acquiescence meant, and accepting with absolute decision the terrible demand. So He made his *soul* an offering for sin; He poured out with his blood his very soul to death. It was the "law in the heart" of Jesus which worked out its dread result on Calvary, and constrained Him to die a voluntary victim for the sins of men. Such service, in whatever task demanded, is well-pleasing to God; such service is alone well-pleasing—the service of mind to Mind, of will to Will, of love to Love.

If this consent on the part of Christ to the divine law inflicting death for sin was acceptable to God who sent Him, the love He therein showed to men was equally pleasing to the Father of men. How false a view is that

[1] Heb. ix. 13, 14, x. 5–10.

which has represented God the Father as all stern justice and law, and Jesus Christ, on the other side, as all tenderness and pitying love! To think in this way is to ignore the very thing that our Lord was most concerned to teach us. Christ's mission proclaims from first to last that "*God* loved the world"; He insisted that He was saying and doing nothing but that for which He was *sent*. From the cross the apostle John draws his witness that "God is love." What proves it?—"That He has sent his Son, the Only-begotten, into the world, that we may live through Him."[1] Out of this divine affection for the world—a love perfectly consistent with wrath, a love too true to be satisfied with any salvation wanting in rectitude and justice—the almighty Father "spared not his own Son." How grateful, then, was the self-sacrifice of Jesus Christ on behalf of sinful men to Him whose offspring they are, who had sent the Only-begotten hither for this very purpose! To the infinite Love, from whose will man and the worlds came, it was an infinite satisfaction to see love thus spend itself for the unworthy beloved. Nay, was not the sacrifice *his* first who sent the Son of his delight, and who (if we may dare thus to speak) endured to see Him suffer? "Herein is love: that *He loved us*! and sent his Son as a propitiation for our sins!"

It was in this twofold spirit, of submission to God and affection to man, that our Lord Jesus fulfilled for us all righteousness. Having entered on the path of representative obedience, He followed it to the end; He was faithful unto death. He submitted to the last penalty of transgression inflicted on his race; He endured to die the

[1] 1 John iv. 7–14.

death of sinners, being "made sin for us, He who knew no sin."[1] He has "borne in his body on the tree" before heaven and earth the fruit and merited consequence of iniquities from which He was wholly innocent, of iniquities culminating in the crime by which his blood was spilt.

When theology has spoken its last word, when reason and conscience have sounded the mystery with their deepest plummet, this will remain the most mysterious and awful, as it is the most glorious of scenes in the records of time. Who has pretended that his theory had solved the Atonement? that he could report all that was in the mind of the Son of God when the great sacrifice was offered and accepted? The act of the eternal Spirit cannot be compressed into the formulæ of time. We look with trembling into these depths of divine sorrow; we listen to the cries of Jesus, and our hearts are wrung with grief and fear. We hear Him whose voice hushed the tempest and called back the spirits of the dead, in prospect of his own death praying in agony, "If it be possible, let this cup pass from Me!" And at last there breaks from the lips of the Sufferer on the cross, no word of reproach against men, but that infinitely appalling exclamation, that cry from God to God, "Why hast Thou forsaken Me?" when the mighty nature of Jesus, strong with the strength of Godhead, staggered and shook beneath its burden and seemed all but to lose its footing. What means this mysterious desolation and horror? what is the load that crushes Him?—He is "bearing away the sin of the world." Our iniquities have taken such hold upon Him, that He is not able to look up. He sheds his blood "for the remission of sins."

[1] 2 Cor. v. 18-21.

The Lord Jesus said on the night of his passion, "This which is written must be fulfilled in Me, And He was reckoned with transgressors."[1] He is in his own eyes, as afterwards to the faith of his Church, the Servant of Jehovah foreseen by the prophet, who, Himself innocent and meek as a lamb, bears the penalty due to his people's transgression and for their sake is led to the slaughter, gaining for them forgiveness by his intercession. "Alienated" we were "from the life of God"; and in his consciousness Jesus Christ tastes of that death—feels Himself forsaken, He to whom the presence and love of the Father were all in all, who said, "I live because of the Father." Jesus did not fear them which kill the body: this was the stroke He dreaded—this fatal separation from the Father; this was the ingredient which made his cup of death deadly. How grievous, then, are those sins which men commit so lightly! how fearful the penalties which human transgression entails! How sternly inflexible that

[1] Luke xxii. 37. We ought, perhaps, to notice here that view of the death of Christ which claims to be the "moral theory" (in distinction from the ordinary "legal" interpretation), regarding the atonement of Christ as a purely subjective reconciliation, effected in the change of the disposition of men towards God which is brought about by the spectacle of the cross. It denies the existence of punitive anger in the divine nature and the necessity for any satisfaction to be offered to the eternal law on the part of sinners; and the numerous terms of the New Testament which are taken to imply those conceptions it resolves into statements of that which takes place in the mind of the reconciled man or in his views of God. Why this should be called the "moral" theory, I have never been able to see: it gives us, it seems to me, a *theatrical* instead of a real atonement. To suppose that Jesus Christ put Himself to dreadful suffering, and sacrificed his life, simply as an extreme way of showing his love and the love of God to men and making an impression upon them, without any objective necessity, any fitness in the sacrifice itself determined by the law of God, is to impute to Him conduct that might have been affectionate, but is in no special sense moral nor even reasonable. Such a sacrifice might excite our pity, but not our reverence nor penitence for sin.

divine righteousness, which laid on Him such an infliction when He stood forth in the sinner's stead, and spared not even for his crying! At what a cost our sins are remitted, and our eternal life is won!

It becomes us to bow in shame and wonder before the cross, rather than to attempt to build it into systems of our own. The fact is there; and it is a fact not of suffering and death alone as in the case of any righteous man, but of expiation. It was a death died in love to sinners by the Holy One of God, which has fulfilled the law of God on their behalf and caused his anger so to turn away from an evil world, that from this day the reign of pardon and hope began. "Ye were reconciled to God through the death of his Son." When our Lord in relating his parable of the vineyard and the wicked husbandmen asked his hearers what should be done to those who killed the son of the lord of the vineyard, they naturally replied: "He will miserably destroy those miserable men."[1] But, as it proves, the clouds of divine wrath and judgement, which then hung over the world and threatened its destruction, have rolled away; and the like clouds hanging over the conscience of guilty men, then and now, are sensibly removed by the effect of the death of Jesus Christ endured for our sin and appropriated by our contrite faith. This is not dogmatic theory; it is historical fact, to which all the Christian ages are witness.

3. So far we have expounded St Peter's great saying about the atonement: "Christ once for all died for sins—*the just* for *the unjust*—that He might bring us near to God."[2] As He hangs on the cross saying only

[1] Matt. xxi. 41. [2] 1 Peter iii. 18 (R.V. margin).

for his murderers, "Father, forgive them," unrighteousness and righteousness, the evil in the hearts of us men and the goodness of God in Him the Son of man, are brought into full contrast and collision. Each served as a foil and provocation to the other. Sin had done its utmost to put away righteousness: righteousness its utmost to put away sin. By the last and worst of its crimes a guilty race put to death the Son of God; and He turned that death into the means of seeking pardon for its perpetrators. Jesus Christ accepted the burden of "the sin of the world," which laid itself upon Him; He lifted it on to his mighty shoulder with the cross, and "took it away."

He was righteous, we unrighteous in this crisis of the cross; and our unrighteousness had brought upon his righteousness an appalling and unexampled burden. This surely is clear, upon the showing of the bare facts of the history. But here it is said, in the name of an earnest and scrupulous virtue, that vicarious atonement is unjust, that it destroys personal responsibility and is radically immoral and indeed impossible, that in fact the just must not and cannot suffer *for* the unjust. This contention, which has been ably and even passionately urged against evangelical doctrine in recent times, has at present lost much of its force, partly through the more guarded and reasonable presentation of the truth itself, but still more in consequence of the change in ethical feeling and view of which we of this generation are the witnesses. Much of the strength of the protest against the vicarious sacrifice lay in the assumptions of the individualistic type of morals which prevailed during the greater part of this century, but is rapidly losing its ascendency. The case

against the doctrine of substitution assumed that each human being is a complete, detached existence, that the human *ego* is, in effect, the absolute. This assumption is faulty in ethics as it is false in biology, and untrue to experience. The human race is an organic unity, like any other. The person exists in his kind, before he exists for himself; and while he exists for himself, the race retains its interest in him and its hold upon him. We are each a part of Adam: all our ancestors share in what we have become; the crimes and follies, the virtues and graces of a hundred generations are running in our blood. At every point in our character and doings we are ourselves; but at no point are we ourselves alone, without dependence, obligation, and the interplay of vicarious activity. Other personalities contribute in a thousand ways to our own, and have suffered and wrought for us, while we in turn act and suffer for those who follow us. These mutual contributions form not the mere environment of the individual, but enter into the substance and texture of himself. The vicarious principle, the representative office held by man for his fellow man, is of the essence of morality and binds mankind into its ethical unity.

> Say not, "It matters not to me;
> My brother's weal is his behoof":
> For in this wondrous human web
> If your life's warp, his life is woof.

Now, in the view of the apostle Paul,[1] Jesus Christ holds a fundamental and pervasive relation to the human race. He is, in the deepest sense of the word, its *natural*

[1] Rom. v. 12-21; 1 Cor. xi. 3, xv. 22, 45-49; Eph. i. 4, 5, iii. 9-11; Col. i. 15-17.

Head and Type, representing it on the heavenly, spiritual, godward side, even as Adam, the fleshly progenitor, upon the earthward side. From Him there derives to our soul its spiritual being and capacity,—affection, intellect, and conscience: "the life" eternally in Him "was the light of men."[1] So far as there exists in us anything that rises above the fleshly, there is something of Christ, the "life-giving spirit," something by which He may claim and hold us. His incarnation rests on this pre-existent kinship. As Dr R. W. Dale writes: "The Lord Jesus Christ is the life of the human race—its highest life—and his relation to the Father is the ideal form of our own relation to God. Had we never sinned, our history would have been a perpetual ascent towards his supreme holiness, and even the highest movements of our moral and spiritual life would have found their ideal expression in Him. . . . According to the law and constitution of our nature we are related to God through the Son of God."[2] Because we partook of his nature spiritually, He in turn partook of our nature physically: "Since the children have communicated in blood and flesh, He also Himself in like manner partook of the same."[3] We do not stand alone, unrelated, self-complete persons; we are units in the social organism, members of the race. And the human race has never

[1] John i. 3–5, 9.

[2] *Lectures on the Atonement:* Preface to 7th edition, p. lxiii. The reader acquainted with this classical work on the Sacrifice for sin will find many echoes of its thought in the present Lecture.

[3] Heb. ii. 14. The writer is showing the reasons why the Son of God entered on a human and suffering life. It was to win for man, through suffering, his rightful glory (vers. 6–10); it was that He might share with men, being their brother, in death and temptation, and thus effect their deliverance (vers. 11–18).

stood alone, unrelated, self-complete; it was created in and for the Son of God's love, to furnish Him with members, who is its "Head over all things" and the "beginning of the creation of God,"[1] from whom, first and last, comes its light of life. We are complete in Him, from foundation to summit.

Jesus Christ therefore does not interpose officiously, as though simply another moved with pity who comes to rescue the condemned, but as One who has the first and best right in us,—as the holy and unfallen Son of man making satisfaction for the fallen and unholy sons of men. He does not so much become our brother in order to redeem us; He redeems us because He is our brother. In the forty-ninth Psalm it is said with irony concerning worldly men, who deem that money answers all things: "None of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him." But it appears that love can do this impossibility, when once the true Brother has been found, the Firstborn of Creation. When Jesus Christ took upon Himself to die as "one for all,"[2] He was perfectly within his rights; the relationship in which He stood to us was such as to warrant the intervention. "I am the good Shepherd," He testifies: "the good shepherd layeth down his life for the sheep." How could He act otherwise? Our peril called Him from the bosom of the Father. He addressed Himself to his office as a work foreseen and prepared for in the eternal counsels, a task devolving on Him, which was entered on as dutifully as willingly, in the spirit of one bent upon fulfilling all righteousness. It was a most just and fitting mediation,

[1] Rev. iii. 14. [2] 2 Cor. v. 14.

however little men deserved or expected it, an act intrinsically and eternally right. The Son of God acknowledged the tie that bound Him to our race. He performed, under that obligation, the unique part which fell to Him as the Head amongst many members, leaving us to do our poor part after his example. The cross of Christ vindicates the principle of the Incarnation, which revealed to us the solidarity of mankind—a solidarity of guilt in Adam, of redemption in Christ Jesus. Instead of being against morality, the vicarious sacrifice brings in a larger and nobler ethics.

Our personal faith in the sacrifice of Christ is the acceptance of this principle; it is the endorsement of what Jesus Christ has justly done and suffered on our behalf. Faith is the counterpart and complement of the atonement. Trusting in Christ crucified, I appropriate Him my Saviour, as in his vicarious death He appropriated me the sinner. I discover myself in Him; and I "see all my sins on Jesus laid." Faith in Jesus is the identifying of my sinful self with the sinless dying Redeemer; it incorporates the soul with Christ, and virtually crucifies me with Him. Faith in Christ is fellowship with Christ,—human, dying, risen, ascended, and returning.

Till such faith is exercised, the death of the Saviour remains ineffectual and practically incomplete. We are responsible persons, after the atonement as before it, holding our fate in our own hands. "God set Him forth," writes St Paul, "a propitiation in his blood, a propitiation availing *through faith*."[1] Our Mediator has reconciled us to God contingently, and subject to this condition, on which

[1] Rom. iii. 25.

He insisted pointedly in all that He did for men. He is the Saviour of them that believe. By this qualification our freedom is perfectly guarded. Nothing is forced upon us. We can, if we are foolish and wicked enough to do so, deliberately reject the saving offers of Jesus Christ and make void the grace of God. We can, if we so choose, turn the cross of Christ into a thing of naught and render it, so far as we are concerned, a great sacrifice wasted and thrown away. His substitutionary atonement in no degree limits or supersedes our liberty of action, but provides for it, and seeks in every possible way to enlist its co-operation. "Behold, I stand at the door and knock!" He is ever saying. He does everything for us, and yet nothing without us. He carries us with Him at each step of his conflict with our sins, by our consenting faith; and bids us work out our salvation, because He works it in us.

Salvation by faith in Christ is a perfect example of organic co-operation, of the unity of the collective and the individual life. The act of faith which links the soul to the dying Saviour, how much it contains! how profound and rich is its moral significance! It marks the hour of new birth, the crisis of our interior history. Such a faith, intelligently exercised, is intrinsically and in all respects saving to the soul; it is at once a justifying and sanctifying act. It carries the entire man with it, and brings his nature at its spring and in all its depths into communion with the regenerating influence of the Spirit of God. It is on the one hand a confession and renunciation of sin, viewed in the light of Christ's cross, abhorred as the cause of the Redeemer's suffering, slain in his death. On the other hand, it grafts the soul into Christ, the original,

immortal stock of humanity, and makes it participator in his Spirit, in the sap and strength of the Vine of which it now becomes a restored, inherent branch. Such a faith by its nature "is reckoned unto righteousness," as St Paul says, and "works through love";[1] for it apprehends and joins itself to the perfect divine-human love and righteousness of Christ Jesus the Lord. Thus to acknowledge Him, to see Him for what He is, to perceive the divinity of his life and the redemption that is in his death—in a word, to believe in Him—is to be in ideal already like Him; and all holiness consists in germ in a true faith in Jesus Christ crucified.

God who sees the end from the beginning and "calls the things that are not as things that are," so sees, and counts this faith for righteousness. As the apostle Paul shows in the concise and profound words of the epistle to the Romans,[2] the man who through his faith is "baptized into the death of Christ," thereby yields himself to the entire current and scope of his Lord's redemptive work. He is "planted together with Him in the likeness of his death," which is copied and rehearsed in the sin-renouncing heart, and should therefore from this root grow onwards into the full fruitage of Christ's risen state, his holy and eternal life spent unto God. Instantly, the sinner's faith in Christ crucified secures his pardon, which was won upon the cross and only waited for the man's own endorsement; ultimately, the same faith, in its expanding and fructifying energy, unfolds into a perfect holiness. By faith, in a word, we enter into a spiritual partnership with Jesus Christ. This is what He called the "new covenant in my

[1] Rom. iv. 5–24, etc.; Gal. v. 6. [2] Chap. vi. 3–10.

blood." The evil and wrong that was ours He makes his, and destroys it: the good that is his He makes ours, and multiplies it. Our guilt is washed out by his blood, our hatred swallowed up in his love, our unrighteousness covered and transformed by his righteousness; his pity, purity, reverence, courage flow into the empty channels of our nature, and Christ is formed in us. But it is faith only, faith always, that makes this commutation possible.

From the first cry of the awakened sinner, "What must I do to be saved?" to the last cry of the dying saint, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit," the soul's life is in faith. "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ" is the answer that meets perpetually its needs and doubts. Our entire Christian experience springs from this source; it takes its direction and colour from the temper of our faith in Christ, and mainly from our attitude towards his cross. "The life that I live," writes St Paul, "I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me." The goal of that life is assimilation to the Saviour's sacrifice: "that I may know Him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being conformed to his death."[1] So the life of men in Christ is a continuous organic process, a moral copartnery of being, grounded in the primal relationship of the Son of God to humanity, which was hidden in the counsels of the divine love "before the foundation of the world," and is manifested in the life and death of Jesus Christ and in the history of his Church to the world's end. The Head partakes, for good or evil, with the members, the members with their Head; the Husband of the Church shares with his sin-stained bride,

[1] Phil. iii. 10.

and she with her sinless and glorious Lord by the communion of the Spirit. God "made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him."[1] He died to put away our sin: we live to put on his righteousness. His cross is the beginning, middle, and end of our salvation on earth. We live a perfect life, when we live in the spirit in which Jesus Christ died.

4. Clearly, then, the death of the Lord Jesus Christ was not an isolated and merely representative sacrifice. His suffering of death has, it is true, its lofty prerogative, that which belonged to Him alone: He bore for us what we could not bear, nor even bear to know, of the curse of sin. But while there is this reservation and inner region of things in which "no one knoweth the Son save the Father," there lies under the shadow of the cross a wide outer circle of common and kindred experience, which He shares with his brethren. It is the vocation of every Christian, with the apostle Paul, to "know *the fellowship of his sufferings*."

In virtue of the communion in sorrow between Christ and humanity, his sufferings were the subject of prophecy; they were the burden which the Old Testament carried beneath its heart. The *Via dolorosa* stretches back all the way from Calvary to Paradise. The Son of man had countless forerunners in his path of tears and blood. A high-minded man, like Plato, could see by the light of common experience that righteousness suffers indefinitely at the hands of the unrighteous and that such suffering is its honour, a privilege which retaliation would destroy. The religious sense of Israel gave a deeper meaning to the

[1] 2 Cor. v. 21.

sufferings of the righteous. The Jewish people held a strict doctrine of retribution; they believed in a fixed correspondence between goodness and happiness; by the law of Moses rewards and penalties were systematically measured out to the righteous and unrighteous within the temporal sphere. On a wide view of family and national history, the maxims of Israelitish piety hold good; the "righteous eat the fruit of their doings," and to the wicked "the reward of his hands is given him." But this rule broke down when applied to personal fortune and to particular occasions. The thirty-seventh and seventy-third psalms and the great book of Job describe the struggles which the problem of the unmerited sufferings of the good caused in the minds of faithful Hebrew saints. They were able to vindicate their faith in the justice of God, by adding to it patience; waiting to see the end of the Lord, they beheld the flourishing evildoer, who had "spread himself like a green tree in its native soil," plucked up by the roots, while the righteous, even when "flesh and heart fail," finds in God "the strength of his heart and his portion for ever."

Still this doctrine of the ultimate adjustment of character and destiny was a merely personal, and therefore a defective solution of the problem. It did not bring the seer within sight of Calvary. The twenty-second psalm strikes a deeper note, issuing too from a lower gulf of sorrow, when the soul that cried, "My God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" comes out of its tribulation at last with the words: "I will declare thy name unto my brethren: in the midst of the congregation will I praise Thee" (ver. 22). The thankful singer has dis-

covered the public blessing that ensues from private sorrow; he sees his own grief and loss turned into the gain of humanity; out of his crushed and bleeding heart there is poured a rare cordial for others. The discipline of pain enters into all that is best in human ministry:

> While they who love and listen best,
> Can little guess or know
> The wounds that from the singer's breast
> Have let such sweetness flow;
> They guess not whence it, gushing, starts,
> The clear and piercing tone,
> That wins its way to other hearts
> Through anguish of its own!

The twenty-second psalm became the especial psalm of Him who, "perfected" by sufferings, "became the author of an eternal salvation." The poet who uttered it for himself and his people in the time of Israel's martyrdom came strangely near to the anguish of the Redeemer, and gave Him words both for his deepest grief and richest joy.[1] But it was a further experience still, and the last advance in the march of prophetic sympathy towards the cross, when the position of the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah had been reached, when it was seen that the unexampled sorrows of Jehovah's Servant, the elect and obedient Israel, were endured not for their own discipline and for the profiting of their faithful brethren only, but *for the salvation of sinners*! This was a grand discovery. The noblest function of the sufferings of righteousness was at length revealed. The vision of it reconciled God's servants to the woes they endured in the times of exile and humiliation; and the ideal of the afflicted Servant, "stricken for his

[1] Matt. xxvii. 46; Heb. ii. 12.

people's transgressions," awaited its realization in the Lamb of God.

Thus by their sorrows endured in loyalty to the kingdom of God and his righteousness, the saints and prophets of the times before the Anointed One prefigured his sufferings, foretelling and fore-acting his afflictions. The same afflictions the sufferings of Christian saints and martyrs have re-enacted. Our Lord promised his first disciples a share in his tribulations, and such a share they amply received. The same cause produced the same result, in Him and them: "If they persecuted Me," He said, "they will also persecute you."[1] But the followers of Christ had learnt to take their sufferings in the spirit of their Master. They accepted them as coming of the wise and holy will of God, and as the consequence of belonging to a world of sin. But they regarded their afflictions, above all, as a testimony for Christ, and as therefore bringing the greatest possible benefit to men. "Now I rejoice in my sufferings for you," writes the apostle Paul to the Christians of Colossæ, "and am filling up in my turn that which remains of the afflictions of the Christ on behalf of his body, which is the Church."[2] His sufferings not only illustrated those of the Redeemer and commended them to men, but in some sort extended them, carrying forward the work of salvation which they had inaugurated. "The blood of the martyrs was the seed of the Church"; nothing gave such lustre to Christianity in the early ages as did the testimony of believers to the presence of Christ with them in persecution and death. The same experience is repeated on the foreign mission field to-day.

[1] John xv. 15–25, xvi. 3. [2] Col. i. 24–26; 2 Cor. iv. 10–15.

All this was due to the cross. Jesus was in his death, more than even in his life, the pattern of the first Christians. The thought that in their martyrdom the divine Sufferer was imaged and the world's salvation furthered, unspeakably sweetened and exalted death for them. The public shame, the refinements of torture, the mockery and execration of the heathen served to bring them nearer to Him, and conformed them to his death. "In nothing I shall be ashamed," says the confident apostle—and he speaks for the heroic age of the Church—"but in all confidence, as always so now, Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether by life or by death."[1] The losses, evils, and pains inflicted by the world on the members of Christ associate them with his passion, and share in its saving efficacy.

So from the cross there is thrown a penetrating and glorifying light upon the ills endured by the good through all the tragedy of human life. The sufferings of Jesus Christ are the flower and consummation of the martyrdom of righteousness. As an expiation for sin, they are unique and solitary, rising into the air of eternity above all human levels; but as a witness for truth, they invite into their fellowship the humblest trial of the most obscure man, or little child, that suffers for God and goodness. There came to the Lord Himself, as there comes to all who take part with Him, the last of his great beatitudes: "Blessed are they that are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

And does not all pain acquire a new meaning and gather a secret hope and blessing from the cross of our

[1] Phil. i. 20.

Lord Jesus Christ? His sufferings were inflicted by evil men. But their conditions lay in the suffering nature of the flesh, in the very constitution of our earthly life. Our diseases, our mortality, and the countless ills that flesh is heir to, while we need not be curious to trace them to definite sins of ourselves or others, are collectively the heritage of a sinful nature. Through them we communicate from birth to death in the cup of anguish which our race is called to drink. By God's grace the punishment of sin is turned into the medicine of sin. So it was in Christ, who suffered for us: "Through death He abolished him that holds the might of death, . . . and delivered those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage."[1] The wages of sin become the means of its discharge and abolition. "He that died," says the apostle Paul of the liberating virtue of Christ's death for believers, "hath been justified (so as to be clear) from sin."[2] And are we not to understand that every suffering which comes upon us under God's appointment, yea and death itself, is designed to share in this releasing and purifying operation? This St Peter teaches, when he writes, speaking not of the pains of martyrdom, but of physical suffering generally: "Since Christ suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves with the same mind (for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin), to the end that ye should spend the rest of your time in the flesh no longer to the lusts of men, but to the will of God."[3] It appears, therefore, that we may associate all our bodily pangs and earthly trials with the sorrows of our Master, and that, through fellowship with his suffer-

[1] Heb. ii. 14. [2] Rom. vi. 7. [3] 1 Peter iv. 1, 2.

ings, all suffering that God sends us becomes salutary and sanctifying.

Love to God, faith in man, power to do right, these we spoke of as chief moral energies derived from the revelation of the Father, Son, and Spirit given to us in the teaching of Jesus Christ. They are energies proper to the nature of man in its very constitution; for he was made to be a vessel of God, framed for communion with the Trinity. His sin had disturbed and all but destroyed that relationship,—which Jesus Christ restores by his atoning death. For sin is a breach of the eternal law, an offence against God that cuts us off from his fellowship; and Christ, acting on our behalf, heals the breach and re-establishes the broken fellowship. He procures for us forgiveness of sins, and the restoring of our forfeited inheritance. Again we become sons of God in Him, and receive the Holy Spirit. The intense suffering of Jesus Christ experienced in this work of redemption reveals to us the greatness of human sin, and the terrible penalties which mankind had incurred in committing it.

We learn, in fine, from the atonement made by the Lord Jesus Christ on our behalf that the moral evil in our nature is radical, but remediable. Love to God, faith in man, power to do right are made ours by *the salvation from sin* which his gospel proclaims and imparts to mankind.

CHAPTER VIII

RESURRECTION AND JUDGEMENT

Death is swallowed up in victory !—Isaiah and St Paul

Some six months before the end, on the occasion of St Peter's formal confession of his Messiahship, our Lord first distinctly announced to his disciples his approaching death. At the same time He predicted his resurrection. We read in St Matthew: "From that time Jesus Christ began to shew his disciples that He must go away to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised up."[1] St Peter's exclamation in reply, "Be it far from Thee, Lord: this shall never be unto Thee," indicates that the promise of the resurrection made no definite impression on our Lord's disciples. Their minds were arrested by the paralysing thought of their Master's death. That the Messiah, as they now knew and had professed Him to be, should be rejected and killed by the rulers of his people, was a prospect which blasted their most cherished and ardent hopes. When shortly afterwards our Lord spoke again to three of them coming down with Him from the mount of the transfiguration of his "rising from the dead," the words were simply unintelligible: "they kept the saying, questioning among themselves what the rising from

[1] Matt. xvi. 21–23.

the dead should mean."[1] The whole matter was distressing and mysterious to the last degree, and the apostles had no heart to question their Master about it.

If they had any theory beforehand about the promised resurrection, it is likely that they thought of the words as parabolic. The miracles of this order which the Lord Jesus had Himself wrought did not point to anything designed to happen in his own case: how could it be, reason would ask, that He should fall a victim to death who had shown Himself its Master and held its keys in his hand? The Jewish dream of an earthly Messianic kingdom had preoccupied the imagination of the apostles; so that until events taught them otherwise, these predictions of death and resurrection, of glory gained through suffering, were wholly enigmatical. Until the last, and even when Christ had actually risen and the report of his rising was abroad, they remained "foolish and slow in heart to believe."[2] The death of their Master affected them with such despair as to render it inconceivable that they should have imagined his resurrection, or credulously accepted it on the report of others. The reality of the event *forced* itself upon them.

So much the more signal was the effect of the resurrection on the mind of the disciples, when they were at last certified of it. It brought about a complete transformation in their views and aims. This change was not accomplished all at once; the miracle was far too great for its significance to be realized in a moment; but we may trace to the hour of the resurrection the origin in the mind of the first disciples of those beliefs

[1] Mark ix. 10. [2] Luke xxiv. 25-27.

that are chiefly distinctive of Christianity and have been most fruitful in its development. St Peter begins his first epistle with thanksgiving to God "who has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus from the dead"; he speaks of his once heathen readers as men who "were redeemed with precious blood, as of a lamb without spot and blemish, even Christ: who was foreknown indeed before the foundation of the world, but was manifested at the end of the times for your sake, who through Him are believers in God, *which raised Him from the dead, and gave Him glory*; so that your faith and hope might be in God."[1] The entire conception which this master apostle holds of Jesus Christ centres in and is determined by the fact of his rising from the dead. From the Redeemer's open grave St Peter's faith issued new born; from the word of the Risen Jesus his preaching took its impulse and direction. The divine glory of Christ, the worth and power of his sacrifice, the redeeming love of God, the nature and extent of his kingdom amongst men,—these and all the kindred truths which form the Christian system were apprehended for the first time in the light of the resurrection; and their promulgation dates from that glorious "third day" when the power of God raised the dead body of Jesus from Joseph's grave and restored Him to men a living and glorified man.

In the teaching of St Paul the resurrection of Christ held a place no less conspicuous and dominant. He puts it by the side of the atoning death, as an event equally signal, the counterpart and complement to that. "I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ

[1] 1 Peter i. 3, 18-21; comp. Acts ii. 24-36, iii. 15, iv. 10, x. 40, 41.

died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that He was buried; and that He hath been raised on the third day according to the Scriptures": thus the Gentile apostle recalls the chief topics of his preaching at Corinth. And he goes on to repeat, as you will remember, the testimony of the various witnesses to the occurrence, concluding with himself, to whom the Risen One had appeared in heavenly glory at a later time, under very singular and affecting circumstances.[1] St Paul's personal faith in Christ was decided by the fact that he knew Him to be raised from the dead. Once convinced of this, the Jesus of Nazareth whom Saul the Pharisee regarded as a false teacher and blasphemer meriting his ignominious end, became in his eyes the very Son of God and his death the atonement for all human sin. So full was St Paul's missionary preaching of this theme, that the Athenians summed it up under the two heads of "Jesus, and the resurrection."[2] In one striking passage, setting everything else aside—even the atoning death—he makes saving faith to consist in the recognition of this truth alone: "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord, and shalt believe in thy heart that *God raised Him from the dead*, thou shalt be saved."[3] In this belief the entire "word of faith" is contained; through it alone "the righteousness of God" is received. For to St Paul's apprehension the salvation that is in Christ centred here; every other faith belonging to the gospel turned upon this faith, having its evidence and warrant in the fact that Jesus Christ is risen from the dead.

Christianity, we have said, is the religion of the

[1] 1 Cor. xv. 1–11. [2] Acts xvii. 18. [3] Rom. x. 4–10.

Incarnation. That statement is not complete unless we add that it is *the religion of the resurrection.* For the Son of God to become man only to succumb to death like any other man would have been an impotent conclusion. "The prince of this world" would then have been the conqueror, driving his divine antagonist from the field; and sin would have destroyed the Prince of life. An incarnation ending in this way we could only think of as a miscarriage and discomfiture. Easter Sunday is the birthday of our faith,—when Christ became to the world in visible and living power, no longer in mere potency and promise, the "beginning" of the new creation, the "firstborn from the dead, that in all things He might have the pre-eminence."[1] His resurrection threw a splendid illumination upon the past. A celestial light breaks out of the gloom that hung over Calvary. St John might have said of all his Master's history what he says at two distinct points in his Gospel: "These things understood not his disciples at the first,"—not until Jesus was glorified.[2] Jesus Christ appeared triumphant. Life and love had won the battle. The hidden truths of the Incarnation and the Atonement shine forth. The son of David is "declared to be the Son of God in power, in accordance with his spirit of holiness, by the resurrection of the dead":[3] his first birth as Son of God amongst men is verified by this second birth; the brightness of the Godhead in Him breaks through its eclipse, while He ascends in two successive steps,—from death to life amongst men, from earthly to heavenly life and lordship.

So the death of Jesus was quickly relieved of its

[1] Col. i. 18. [2] John ii. 22, xii. 16. [3] Rom. i. 3, 4.

ignominy; the shame of the cross was turned into glory, its defeat into victory over sin and death. We perceive, with St Paul, that when Christ hung as one accursed by God upon the tree, He "redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us." We welcome Him released from the bonds of death into which He had entered as the bearer of our sins; with his release we are discharged from condemnation. He "was delivered because of our trespasses, and was raised because of our justification,"[1]— because his propitiation on our behalf was accepted and we acquitted; He therefore, our Surety, was restored to his brethren, for death had no more dominion over Him. Through our Lord's resurrection we believe in the forgiveness of our sins; we know Him to be "exalted a Prince and Saviour, to give repentance and remission," to be the High Priest of our race, who has offered an expiation availing for all mankind and has obtained eternal redemption for us. Such is the honour and power that accrue to the Son of God from henceforth.

The Father who raised Him from the dead is equally glorified, since He thus confirms all that the Son of his good pleasure declared of Him to men. In giving Him back to the world which had so shamefully used Him, God proclaims that, notwithstanding, He is reconciled to men and calls them into the kingdom of his Son. Nor less does the Holy Spirit glorify Himself in this revelation. For He who dwelt without limit in the humanity of Jesus and through whom the Father wrought this amazing work, displays in it his boundless power over our nature and the energy which He will exert in the members of the vast

[1] Gal. iii. 13; Rom. iv. 24, 25.

body of the believing Church, whose Head He has exalted from the realm of death to immortal life and dominion.

By this manifestation we are taught "what is the exceeding greatness of the divine power toward us who believe, according to that working of the might of his strength which the Father wrought in the Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and seated Him at his right hand in the heavenly places."[1] So strictly are soul and body in man's nature identified, that the apostle argues without any sense of difficulty from the physical resurrection (of Jesus) to the spiritual resurrection (of those who believe on Jesus). But the power of the Spirit of God which was put forth in the raising of the slain Jesus, extends in his people from the spiritual to the natural sphere; it will in the end take physical effect upon ourselves, as upon the body of our Lord. The apostle reasons that "if the Spirit of Him that raised Jesus our Lord from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ Jesus from the dead shall quicken also your mortal bodies through his Spirit that dwelleth in you."[2] We are "debtors" to the Holy Spirit therefore, both for our present and future salvation, in the character alike of sons and heirs of God in Christ, and for the redemption of the body with the spirit. He is the "earnest of our inheritance."[3] The principle and spring of the resurrection is in those who have the Spirit of Jesus Christ. He who could not suffer his Holy One to see corruption will recover from the grave all those who are Christ's in spirit and partake with the Holy One. The act of Jesus when, on his

[1] Eph. i. 19, 20. [2] Rom. viii. 10, 11.
[3] Rom. viii. 12–17; Eph. i. 13, 14.

first appearance after returning from the grave, He said to the gathered Church, "Peace be unto you," was profoundly significant. "He breathed on them, and said unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained."[1] Those great words are grievously narrowed and impoverished, when they are made to signify the commissioning of a priesthood and its endowment with official powers of absolution, whereas they communicate to the whole body of believers the new life of the Spirit, the forgiveness and peace of God, which every member of Christ, according to the grace of the Spirit he possesses, is empowered to dispense to this sinful, troubled world.

Thus, on the one side, Christ's resurrection set its seal on all past revelations of God and the ways of God. It unlocked to the Church the Old Testament; it enabled Jesus for the first time to "interpret in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself."[2] The glory shining from the risen Saviour lighted up the entire landscape of divine truth; it gave meaning, unity, power, and grandeur to that which man had learned already of the Godhead, and of himself as a divine offspring. On the other side, it threw a far-reaching and mysterious light into the future of our existence, a light that relieved the gloom of death and the grave. It gave birth to a magnificent hope for every soul of man. The dying Jesus breathed it in the ears of the criminal, penitent by his side: "This day shalt thou be with Me in paradise." He had uttered it to Martha of Bethany mourning her bereavement: "Thy brother shall rise again. . . . He that believeth on Me, though he die,

[1] John xx. 19-23. [2] Luke xxiv. 25-27, 44-49.

yet shall he live."[1] The messengers of the cross have carried it everywhere through this world full of dying men, a world that has no charm but forgetfulness to still the heart's aching for its lost beloved or to banish the horror of corruption and the tomb. Life and immortality are brought to light through the gospel.

Let us try to estimate the moral value of the Christian hope of immortality.

This is a hope that, in some sense, the human mind has always cherished. It lies "deep-seated in our mystic frame." The earlier ages and the older religions were rife with presentiments and partial anticipations of the Christian doctrine of immortality. Prophecy, philosophy, poetry had brooded over the grand "perhaps," had argued it and sung of it in many strains. The "mysteries" of Greek paganism, derived probably from Egyptian and Oriental sources, had dramatized it in impressive forms. That men would exist in some sort or other after death was generally believed, or at least hoped for, in the ancient world, by those who held a definite religious faith. But scepticism had so far prevailed at the Christian era, that the dominant tone on the subject was one of despair; and St Paul expresses the common opinion in the motto quoted in his famous chapter on the resurrection: "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die." This sentiment was inscribed on many a Greek tombstone. Everywhere the apostle found men "having no hope and without God in the world." When he preached of the resurrection at Athens, we are told that "some mocked; but others said, We will hear thee concerning this yet

[1] John xi. 21–27.

again."[1] This division of feeling represents the state of educated Greek thought on the subject.

The ancient Egyptians present in their ideas and manners a complete contrast to the Greeks. The realm of mortality with them dominated the living world. Their pyramids, the most laborious and enduring constructions on the face of the globe, are royal sepulchres, monuments to the power of death. "These tombs, compared with which the royal palaces appeared like hostelries, formed a number of funerary cities more extensive than the cities of the living."[2] According to their creed, which is of unknown antiquity, the body belongs permanently to the man; it was therefore *preserved* for him in the mummy,—so familiar an object in our museums. The *ka* (*double*) of the man—a sort of "ghost" or aëriform copy of his body—lived in the tomb for its house, attached to the mummy; if the latter perished, the man's image in stone might answer the same purpose. Above the *ka* were higher and more sublimated essences, or souls, still conceived as material, the highest of which (*khou*) might hope to enter, after long journeying and judgement, the seat of the gods in heaven. The admittance of the soul to the region of the blessed depended partly on the moral character of its earthly life, and partly on its knowledge of the proper ceremonies and magic pass-words. To prepare the soul for this ordeal each of the mummies was provided

[1] Acts xvii. 32.

[2] Maspero: *Histoire ancienne des peuples de l'Orient*, p. 58. See *Livre premier* of this concise and valuable work, to which we do not know any equal in English, upon the religion and life of the early Egyptians. Also de la Saussaye's *Manual of the Science of Religion*, vol. i, pp. 412-443 (Eng. trans.).

with a copy of the *Book of the Dead*, from which, preserved in this way, great part of what is known of the Egyptian religion has been extracted. Opposite to heaven there stood a hell, a place of darkness and torment, awaiting the wicked condemned by the twenty-four judges who sit in the Hall of Truth and Justice to question and weigh the souls that come in a constant stream before them. The Egyptian theory of the world of the dead was highly elaborated and imposing, and the wealth and art and toil of the nation were lavishly spent in its service. Of no other people has it been so signally true that they were "all their lifetime subject to bondage through fear of death."

In the Jewish schools the doctrine of a future "resurrection both of the just and unjust" was accepted by all save a Sadducean minority; this was in fact the most prominent and popular article in the creed of the Pharisees; and on this point St Paul felt that he could appeal to the sympathies of his fellow countrymen.[1]

During the earlier history of Israel the energies of its faith had been largely absorbed in the present, in the life of the people, in its occupation of the Promised Land and in the visible duties of religion; so that the life beyond was dimly discerned, and the mind of the Hebrew saint in death rested on the general assurance of God's goodness and fidelity, content to say,

> Into thine hand I commend my spirit:
> Thou hast redeemed me, O Jehovah, Thou God of truth.

But when times of exile came and the Israelite was driven from his home and people, his thoughts turned to

[1] Acts xxiii. 6, xxiv. 14, 15.

the other world, and he learnt to look more and more for the heavenly city. Side by side with the hope of the Messiah's coming and his new kingdom of righteousness on earth, there grew in the Jewish breast that other hope, of the resurrection, which is so prominent in the book of Daniel and the confessions of the Maccabæan martyrs. The later religious writings outside of Scripture, belonging to the times immediately before Christ, are full of this consoling thought. So in the apocryphal Wisdom of Solomon we read:[1]

> The souls of the righteous are in the hand of God,
> And there shall no torment touch them.
> In the sight of the unwise they seemed to be dead:
> And their departure was accounted a calamity,
> And their going from us to be utter destruction:
> But they are in peace.
> For though they have been punished in the sight of men,
> Yet is their hope full of immortality;
> And having been a little chastened, they shall be greatly rewarded:
> For God proved them, and found them worthy of Himself.

This is a noble confession and a clear announcement of the immortality of the soul. But Jewish theology, while it held this firm belief in the blessed future of "the souls of the righteous," had no clear expectation of the redemption of *the body*. Nature teaches, with a cruel monotony of evidence, that man's bodily frame, like that of the brutes, perishes in the grave and is the prey to hapless corruption. Then shall "the dust return to the earth as it was, and the spirit return unto God who gave it":[2] this was the most definite view of human destiny that either Gentile wisdom or Hebrew faith had reached

[1] Chap. iii. 1–5. [2] Eccles. xii. 7.

before the resurrection of Jesus. From the teaching of the prophets, especially in Isaiah xxv, xxvi, the hope was derived of victory over death for Israel and the righteous; and the Pharisees appear to have expected that "the soul of the good would pass into *another body*";[1] but no conception had been formed of a future bodily existence continuous with the present, or of the restoration of man's complete personality after death. It is just this which forms the essence of the Christian doctrine of the resurrection. There was no fact upon which such a faith could be based, until the buried Jesus rose to life immortal, issuing from Joseph's grave.

Now, when the restoration of *the body with the spirit* has been assured, the hope of a future life is at last set upon a safe and tenable footing. Long ago Aristotle showed, with pitilessly decisive logic, that the only immortality to be looked for upon natural grounds is that of the universal reason manifesting itself in man, not of the "susceptible reason" which constitutes his particular, sensitive self.[2] We are made up of body and spirit, and our selfhood is unimaginable to us without its own body. Hence the mysterious dread which the spirit feels for death: "we do not want to be unclothed."[3] The instinct which cries out for life beyond the grave is stultified by nature and reason confronting it with the fact of the dissolution of the corporeal partner in our personality. "I do not believe," said Vinet, "in the immortality of the soul; I believe in the immortality of *the man*—soul and body." Tennyson expresses the two natural and conflicting

[1] Josephus, *Jewish War*, ii. 8 (14).
[2] *De Anima*, iii. 4, 5.
[3] 2 Cor. v. 4.

theories of immortality in two separate stanzas of the *In Memoriam:*

> Thou wilt not leave us in the dust:
> Thou madest man, he knows not why,
> He thinks he was not made to die;
> And Thou hast made him: Thou art just.

So the heart's instincts speak, when most deeply stirred. But strict reason, uninformed by any revelation, limits this claim and reduces it to the "faith as vague as all unsweet":

> That each, who seems a separate whole,
> Should move his rounds, and fusing all
> The skirts of self again, should fall
> Remerging in the general Soul.

The "immortality of the soul" is therefore a precarious, unsatisfying principle, until completed by the assurance that the human spirit will reassume a bodily form and be once more "clothed," and housed within its "house that is from heaven." The possibility of this reunion is demonstrated in the case of Jesus Christ, whose resurrection was not an isolated, anomalous incident, but a representative fact, the inauguration of a new order, the *instantia probans* for redeemed humanity. To quote the careful and impressive words of Bishop Westcott upon this point:[1]

> On the one side we are so constituted as to cling to the belief in the continuance of our personality after death: on the other, reason points to death as a phenomenon absolutely singular, which closes life, as far as we know it, and takes away the conditions of our life. But if a single experience can shew that these conditions are not destroyed, but suspended as far as we observe them, or modified by the action of some new law; that what seems to be a dissolution is

[1] *The Gospel of the Resurrection*, chap. ii. § 15. The discussion of "the elements of personality" in this chapter is of very special value and importance.

really a transformation; that the soul does not remain alone in a future state, but is still united with our body, that is with an organism which in a new sphere expresses the law which our present body now expresses in this: then reason will welcome the belief in our future personality no less than instinct. For the truth is not against reason, but beyond it. Reason shews simply that what we commonly see, what we learn from the analysis of our own nature, lends no support to the conclusion which we cannot abandon. But let some new fact come in, and all will be changed, if that reveals to us something of the character of the life after death. Such a fact is the resurrection [of Christ].

The resurrection of our Lord was an occurrence altogether novel and unique. "Christ hath been raised from the dead, the *firstfruits* of them that are asleep."[1] Those whom He had Himself recalled from the grave simply returned to life, as if they had recovered from sickness or swooning; for them death was not destroyed, but delayed. They came out of the grave upon this side, by the door through which they had entered. Christ issues on the other side and beyond death, "now no more to return to corruption." He cries in the Apocalypse: "I became dead; and lo, I am living for ever and ever!"[2] He had risen to a new phase of existence, not separated from the present or discontinuous with it, but strangely superior to its limitations. His person was changed, so that those who knew Him best did not recognize Him at the first glance; but a little scrutiny made the recognition perfect. His body had undergone, if the words may be allowed, an evolution and sublimation in the grave; it had become, or was in process of becoming, that "body of glory" which Saul of Tarsus saw for a moment on the way to Damascus, and to which he refers in Philippians iii. 20, 21,—a "spiritual body" substituted for the present "natural body," such as

[1] 1 Cor. xv. 20. [2] Rev. i. 18.

the same apostle anticipates that the saints will wear after their resurrection. Our gross, defective, and suffering earthly frame—"this corruptible," as St Paul styles it—is capable of transformation into an organism of a more adequate and enduring make. It will issue from that metamorphosis the same, and yet not the same. The change, as the apostle holds, will result from the operation of spiritual forces on the material conditions of existence; it will be the unfolding of the life of Christ in those who are his, "the revelation of the sons of God";[1] and it will supervene at the time of the Redeemer's advent, alike on those who are found then living in the flesh and on those whose corpses ages ago have crumbled indistinguishably into the soil. So the great apostle writes:[2]

> Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. The mortal in us will be swallowed up of life!

A mystery indeed! but is there anything in it all more mysterious than that which befell the body of the buried Jesus? To men who knew the facts about his resurrection the entire outlook of destiny was changed. Death and the grave took an altered aspect, losing their chief terrors. The dissolution of our corruptible body was now, to the eyes of faith, but the wasting of a seed dropped into the earth, from whose corruption you count that there will spring a new and more abundant life. By his appearing, in a word, our Saviour Christ Jesus has "abolished death, and brought to light life and incorruption."[3]

[1] Rom. viii. 18–23. [2] 1 Cor. xv. 50–54; 2 Cor. v. 4. [3] 2 Tim. i. 10.

1. The gospel of Christ assures to those who believe and obey it a complete *victory over death.* The ethical value of this assurance is immense. No truth ever proclaimed has contributed so greatly and so directly to diminish the sum of human misery and augment the sum of happiness as this one doctrine of the resurrection to eternal life through Jesus Christ. And it has contributed to happiness in such a way as to promote virtue in an equal degree.

"Thanks be unto God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!" St Paul, who raises this shout of joy over his great defence of the resurrection, was amongst the most fearless of men. Yet he shuddered at death. He faced mortal perils at the call of duty as bravely as any soldier on the battlefield; but he felt profoundly that horror and aversion from the prospect of the grave which is common to our kind; he had traced the fear to its cause, and found its "sting" in the consciousness of sin. The dread of death is an emotion that is suppressed every day; it can be overborne by passion, or held down by courage and force of will, or banished for a while by distraction; but nevertheless it remains a powerful and constant factor in human experience. Death casts its shadow over all earthly joys and affections, over all our personal interests and pursuits. And it is a shadow that spreads and thickens with the advance of age; it devours in its darkness one by one the objects that are most beloved; its blackness is more appalling in proportion to the wealth of life, to the number and sacredness of our human ties. We may be schooled to resignation; we may reason ourselves into a stoical sub-

mission to fate, and may cease to protest against the inevitable. There is a certain heroism in this impassiveness; but it is not victory; it is anything but joy. And that marble calm of the mourner's brow, who has said to his heart's friend, "Farewell for ever," is no symbol of triumph over love or death; it hides a grief that blights and kills like frost. "The sorrow of the world worketh death."

For ages our Christian dead have been carried to their resting-place under the banners of the resurrection. The Son of God and man, He who in the might of his love wrestled with death and broke a passage through its stronghold into the light beyond, greets us now on our funeral march with the salutation, "I am the Resurrection and the Life!"—words that make the believer's heart, through its tears and groaning, shout unto God as with the voice of triumph. With such words sorrow-stricken men have comforted themselves and each other in their hours of mortal fear and anguish for many centuries past. This constant ministry of the great Christian hope, acting upon us when the spirit is most sensitive and most deeply stirred, and inwrought with the social and family affections, has influenced pervasively the common temperament. The scepticism cherished by individuals and particular circles amongst men breathing a Christian atmosphere, cannot destroy nor greatly weaken the general effect of faith in the resurrection. This faith diffuses a buoyancy and cheerfulness of tone, a sense of stability in the system of things, an aptness in men to lay aside their mourning and return from it to duty with serious and chastened purpose, a conviction not often reasoned out, but all the more inwardly felt, of the

worth of earthly existence and the safety of life's true goods, which have been amongst the main conditions of the happiness and progress of Christian peoples. We come from the graveside with the apostle's exhortation sounding in our hearts: "Wherefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord." Our treasures are not lost, but laid up in heaven. "If we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also that fell asleep through Jesus, God will bring with Him."[1]

Despite the pretentious unbelief and the worldliness and animalism of our age, there lies firm beneath our feet this foundation of God. On it is built the security of the human heart. Blessed be God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who raised Him from the dead, and through Him has given to us everlasting consolation and good hope in grace. As cultivation advances and science brings the facts of nature nearer to the common imagination, it becomes increasingly difficult to live a life of cheerfulness and equanimity without this hope of the gospel. The old lightheartedness and popular gaiety are banished. Religious unbelief gravitates, by a law inherent in the advance of the mind, to pessimism. As men grow more thoughtful, death grows more visible. The *mal de siècle* of modern thought is no new thing under the sun; the writer of Koheleth diagnosed it two thousand years ago. "In much wisdom," he said, "is much grief: and he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow."[2] The achievements of physical science amount to a richer spoil

[1] 1 Cor. xv. 58; 1 Thess. iv. 14. [2] Eccles. i. 18.

laid at the feet of death—unless death has a Conqueror. Our surer apprehension of natural law means a clearer discernment of the old maxim, that "man hath no pre-eminence above the beasts." "All go unto one place," says the Ecclesiast; "all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again."[1] Schopenhauer, with his counsel that we suppress "the will to live," and von Hartmann, who exposes "the fiasco of existence," are the most logical of modern philosophers; Leopardi, who chants for his refrain *l'infinita vanità del tutto,* is the most inspired of poets—if there be no living God and no risen Christ.

The Italian Leopardi was one of the typical men of this century. He was a contemporary of Lord Byron, but a figure far more touching than that of the proud and lawless English poet, who bore through Europe "the pageant of his bleeding heart." Leopardi possessed the delicate sensibility and lucid insight of genius, enriched with the finest culture, but lodged in a weak and suffering body; and at the age of eighteen he had suddenly abandoned all religious faith. He is the poet of "infelicity," and sings from the abysses of the human heart where deep calleth unto deep. His clear, piercing notes, while they enchant the ear, chill the listener to the very soul. He sang of life as he saw and knew it—a suffering, thinking man, without hope and without God in the world. He says somewhere:[2]

[1] Eccles. iii. 19, 20.

[2] These passages are taken from E. Caro, *Le Pessimisme au xixe siècle,* chap. ii. A translation of *The Poems of Leopardi,* prefaced by an interesting *Life,* has been made by F. H. Cliffe (Remington, 1893); but the rendering is not as effective as might be desired.

At other times I have envied fools and imbeciles, and those who had a great opinion of themselves; and I could willingly have changed my lot with that of any of them. To-day I envy no longer either fools or sages, either the great or the small, the feeble or the strong. I envy the dead; and it is with them that I would wish to change.

Yet more bitterly, in his poem on the *History of the Human Race:*

The last and most fatal boon bestowed on men was Truth. We deceive ourselves when we say that man's perfection lies in the knowledge of the true, that all his evils proceed from false ideas and ignorance. It is quite the contrary; for the truth is sad. Truth, which is the substance of all philosophy, should be carefully hidden from the multitude; for if they knew it, they would fold their arms and crouch down on the earth to wait for extinction. Let us carefully cherish amongst them the opinions that we know to be false, and falsehood will prove their true benefactor! Let us extol those chimerical ideas which generate noble acts and thoughts, which sustain devotion and the virtues tending to the general good, those fair and happy imaginations which alone give worth to life.

This man has sounded for us the misery of a great soul, heir to the Christian faith and disinherited. He has explored, reporting as he saw, the

> ever-breaking shore
> That tumbles in the Godless deep.

"The truth is sad," beyond utterance and beyond endurance, if there is no resurrection of the dead and Christ hath not been raised, if death be the terminus of human action and desire, and our progress has *that* for its final goal.

Nor has collectivism any advantage over individualism here. There is no guarantee for the immortality of the race, other than for that of the man. The grave mocks our altruistic equally with our self-seeking instincts. It is a

high-sounding strain that George Eliot has given to the Positivists to sing:

> Oh may I join the choir invisible
> Of the immortal dead who live again
> In minds made better by their presence,
> . . . in scorn
> For miserable aims that end with self,
> In thoughts sublime that pierce the night like stars,
> And with their mild persistence urge man's search
> To vaster issues!

But how many of us will win the immortality of posthumous influence? The world soon forgets even its leaders, and tramples onwards over their graves. In a little while its course, too, will be run; and the entire race, like the individual man, will have sunk into the sepulchre. Oblivion covers everything. The names of Cæsar and of Shakespeare will perish as certainly as yours and mine. Nature holds out no better hope for the body of humanity than for its single members. No; there is nothing, absolutely nothing, for any one or all of us to build upon against the sweeping flood of time and death but the word of Jesus Christ. He has declared: "I am the resurrection and the life. . . . Where I am, there shall also my servant be. . . . Heaven and earth shall pass away; but my word shall not pass away." And if *He* has deceived us, we Christians are of all men most miserable,—most miserable, to have fallen from such a height, to have cherished such a hope and find it out to be an illusion and a lie!

But "I know Him whom I have believed; and I am persuaded that He is able to guard that which I have committed unto Him against that day."

2. While the doctrine of the resurrection involves the

grandest issues of human destiny, it bears at the same time upon the common, coarse temptations of material life. It creates a new sense of *the sanctity of the body.* It sets the virtues of temperance and chastity upon a firmer footing, and clothes them with added and most solemn and powerful sanctions.

Ancient ethics tended to regard the body with contempt, —"this muddy vesture of decay." The Greeks indeed realized and cultivated the charms of physical beauty, as no other people before or since them; they fashioned their gods in images of ideal majesty and loveliness, patterned from the human form divine. But their art and beauty sank into a debasing sensuousness. The needs of war and the claims of civic duty had served to promote manly activity and protect domestic virtue, while the State required a breed of valiant citizens. But as social ties were loosened and local citizenship became merged in a universal empire, the sanctions guarding family life were weakened on all hands and a flood of lust and uncleanness swept over the Græco-Roman civilization. The teachings of philosophy to a large extent aggravated, instead of checking, the social evil. If man's best hope was at death to shake off the flesh as a soiled, worn garment, if he regarded his body as a prison-house where he is bound by chains of passion, what sufficient reason could he have for purity? Only those weaker motives remained which arise from considerations of health and good taste and reputation, and perhaps of benevolence. Since the flesh is an accident of our being, and no part of its enduring substance, why not snatch its enjoyments by the way, leaving it then willingly to corruption when the soul is

freed from its chain? Or if the soul expires with the body, so much the more need to take our fill of pleasures while we may: "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die!" If matter is evil, our material part belongs to the realm of evil: it is doomed to corruption, how should it rise above its destiny?

These principles and reasonings undermined virtue as Greek culture spread; they reappeared in the corruption of Christian doctrine that commenced in late apostolic times, taking shape on the one hand in ascetic rigour towards the body, and on the other in unbridled licentiousness. The former tendency, no less than the latter, St Paul stigmatized as a "doctrine of demons."[1] If the tide of impurity was to be arrested and civilization saved from physical decay, it was necessary that a barrier should be raised against these demoralizing influences. Naturalistic ethics had ended in the dishonouring and destruction of nature. A new sacredness must be conferred on the body, a new reverence attached to marriage and household life. And this we owe to the preaching of Jesus and the resurrection. Our life in the flesh was ennobled when the Word was made flesh; it was sanctified when the incarnate Word, the son of Mary, rose on our behalf from the dead, to live evermore in his glorified body unto God.

Reading St Paul's argument in the latter part of the sixth chapter of his first epistle to the Corinthians, we see how intimate is the bearing of the event of the resurrection upon the Christian virtue of chastity. Writing to the city renowned for its profligacy, where the desecration of the body was made an act of religion,—he declares:

[1] 1 Tim. iv. 1-5.

The body is not for fornication, but for the Lord; and the Lord for the body: and God both raised the Lord, and will raise up us through his power. Know ye not that your bodies are limbs of Christ? Am I then to take away the limbs of Christ and make them limbs of an harlot?—God forbid!

Your body, he says, "is a temple of the Holy Spirit"; it was "bought" with the blood of God's Son, that it might be used for his glory. Every other sin is "outside of the body; but the fornicator sins against his own body." The act of unchastity is an outrage committed by the man upon his own person, as well as upon that of the other; it offends against the life of our race. It degrades the inmost self.

> I waive the quantum o' the sin,
> The hazard o' concealing;
> But och! it *hardens a' within*,
> And petrifies the feeling!

So Robert Burns puts it, in his wise and touching *Epistle to a Young Friend*; and he never penned truer or more heart-felt words. This offence concerns not the outer relations of the man to material nature, nor the use of things which like "meats for the belly" perish with the using and lie outside our permanent being; the sin involves the most sacred and vital personal relations, and the working of passions deep in the heart, that strike downwards into the soul and spirit and affect for good or evil our whole destiny. The Corinthian vice pollutes the shrine of Godhead in humanity. It eats like a foul, secret cancer into the vitality of societies and nations, debasing our manhood and destroying our womanhood, and brings down on the shameless practisers God's heavy and punitive anger.

The atonement and resurrection of Christ stamp a divine dignity upon the physical nature of man, and give to it an essential place in our constitution as sons of God. "Destroy this temple," the Lord Jesus once exclaimed, standing before the Jewish temple on Mount Moriah, "and in three days I will raise it up!" "But," the evangelist adds, "He spake of the temple of his body"[1]—a house of God more sacred and august, more enduring, more wonderfully wrought, more to be guarded and honoured than any shrine reared by mortal hands; a living temple, fashioned by the Creator's skill, the body prepared for Him and built up through ages from the foundation of the world. In such a temple your immortal spirit is enshrined. Keep it clean; devote it to the Maker; "ye are not your own, for ye were bought with a price: glorify God in your body." Such is the tenor of Christian exhortation on this head. The physical frame is no mere integument—a husk to be thrown to the waste heap of nature, when it is worn by sickness or bruised by injury and broken up by death. "Flesh and blood," it is true, "cannot inherit the kingdom of God." But there is a spiritual body, that is heir to this natural body of the flesh. The corruptible is the seed of the incorruptible. And we "shall receive back the things done in the body, whether good or bad."[2] This frame of ours is redeemed from the grave: we shall need it, we shall wear it again—as a body of glory, fashioned like unto that of Christ, or as a body of disgrace and punishment. So the self-respect which the Christian believer gains from knowing that he shares in the life of the Son of God

[1] John ii. 19–22. [2] 2 Cor. v. 10.

includes a reverent care for his body as the vessel and vehicle of his God-given life. He will firmly rule its passions; he will sanctify its appetites and functions; and he will hold it as sacred in every other person as in himself.

"In the resurrection," the Lord Jesus said, "they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as angels in heaven."[1] The difference of sex will, apparently, be merged in some higher distinction in God's eternal kingdom. Meanwhile, Christ has reasserted the marriage law of creation, and has annulled the relaxation granted under Moses to "the hardness" of the ancient Jewish heart.[2] He places honour upon those who should renounce in his service the endearments of earthly love and domestic ties, "making themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake,"—the "unmarried" who, as St Paul describes, are "careful" only "for the things of the Lord, that they may be holy both in body and in spirit."[3] But Christ and his apostle do not lay this condition as a yoke upon any: vows of lifelong celibacy taken in early youth are contrary to the spirit of their teaching. The Christian laws of wedlock are equal for man and woman. The former must bring to the marriage union a mind and person as clean as that which he expects to find. If masculine passions are stronger, so much the stronger is the virile will and reason that must discipline them. The social opinion which makes sins against chastity fatal in one sex, but venial in the other, is utterly unchristian, and illogical besides. Indulgence to masculine lust is so much ruin to feminine virtue.

[1] Matt. xxii. 30. [2] Matt. xix. 3–12. [3] 1 Cor. vii. 34, 35.

It is not unlikely that the system of Christian morals will be exposed in the near future to formidable attacks in this direction. Renan has somewhere said that "nature knows nothing of chastity"; and naturalistic ethics are disposed to know nothing of it. There is an active school of socialism that appears to seek in sexual license a sort of compensation for the despotism it would impose in other departments of life. Our domestic institutions are assailed with astounding boldness by the propagators of the "new ethic." They point to the army of harlot women that is levied and maintained in the great cities by vicious men, to the terrible fact that law and public opinion, under the existing *régime*, fail to cope with the social evil; and they ask whether a social system maintained under such conditions is worth preserving, whether it is not to a great extent a hypocrisy and a sham; whether the stigma placed on the "unfortunate" should not in justice be removed; and whether, finally, the yoke of wedlock, often unsupportably burdensome, had not better be dissolved and men and women of mature age left free to associate at their private liking, without the interference of Church or State. It is shocking to report such proposals as these; but they appear to find considerable attention from the large public of discontent and unbelief. Nothing less is designed than the overthrow of legal marriage,—which means in effect the destruction of the family, and the return of civilized mankind to a condition worse than savagery; for the lowest savages put some restraint on animal instinct, and guard the marriage union by religious rites and fixed sanctions. Nothing could be conceived more wicked and fatal than this policy; nothing could more completely

stultify and undo the long toil of human advancement. It is the reversion of man toward the brute.

The Church of Christ must bestir herself to combat this Satanic agitation, if it should gain head; above all, she must remedy the depraved conditions out of which it arises. She must insist more strongly and plainly on the sacredness and honour of marriage, on the foulness of those sins which debase and desecrate it, on the awful sanctions and penalties with which God's laws have guarded and fenced it. She must inculcate by all means in her power, on young and old, on all classes high and low, her doctrine of bodily sanctity. She must protect the virtue of her children, and teach her young men, as St Paul the converted men of Thessalonica, to "win the mastery of" the body, the soul's vessel and instrument, and to live "in sanctification and honour, not in the lust of concupiscence, as the Gentiles which know not God."[1] She must wage upon social vice a constant, vehement war, without truce, without fear,—a war of rescue, a war of argument, a war of denunciation and exposure. She must thunder the wrath of God from heaven against the debauchers of their kind, and preach with the power of the Holy Spirit the apostolic law: "Let marriage be had in honour among all, and the bed undefiled: for fornicators and adulterers God will judge."[2] By the love of God, by the purity of Jesus, by the hope of heaven, by the dignity of man-

[1] 1 Thess. iv. 3–5: it is the body that St Paul, as we understand him, means by "his own vessel"—or, as we should render it, "the vessel of himself" (τὸ ἑαυτοῦ σκεῦος). "What the tool is to the hand, or vase to the essence it holds, that the body is to the man's self": see the writer's Notes on this passage in the *Cambridge Bible for Schools*.

[2] Heb. xiii. 4.

hood and the honour of womanhood, by reverence for parentage and childhood, Christ's militant hosts are bound to contend with and subdue in human society the fleshly lusts which war against the soul.

3. St Paul looked forward to a *redemption of material nature,* which, as he conceived, will accompany man's resurrection from the grave. It is in the eighth chapter of the epistle to the Romans that he casts a glance, very penetrating though brief, into this mysterious aspect of future destiny. He writes:[1]

> For the earnest expectation of the creation waiteth for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was made subject to vanity (frustration), not of its own will, but by reason of Him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only so, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for our adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.

St Paul hears in the sighing of nature an echo of the sighs of the children of God longing for their full redemption, burdened with a suffering and tempted flesh and with the wrongs of an evil world. These groanings he interprets as the travail pains of a vast and glorious birth, for which all things will at last be ripe, when the Son of God returns to claim his redeemed brethren, raising their bodies from the dust of the earth where Nature has so long hidden them. Science has shown us that pain and death in the animal creation go back to the early periods of this world's evolution and have not ensued, as it was once supposed, upon man's fall by sin. Rather it

[1] Rom. viii. 18–25.

seems as though the power which wrought our fall had darkened the cosmos before the birth of our race, and the sighing of creation in its bondage is only now at length articulated in the griefs of man. Whether we look backward or forward, the relations between man and the world around him are full of mystery and awe. He partakes through his body in the existence of nature, and is subject to all its laws, mechanical, chymical, and biological; and Christianity teaches that nature, in some sense, partakes with him in bondage, and its restoration turns upon his emancipation from the law of sin and death. Our mother Earth will be ransomed from corruption, along with us her unhappy children. In the words of one of the latest and ablest interpreters of this epistle: [1]

> The final glory of the saints will be a crisis of mysterious blessing for the whole created universe. In ways absolutely unknown, but none the less divinely fit and sure, the ultimate and eternal manifestation of Christ Mystical, the Perfect Head with his perfected members, will be the occasion and the mediating cause of the emancipation of "nature," in its heights and depths, from the cancer of decay and its entrance on an æon of indissoluble life and splendour. Doubtless that goal will be reached through long processes and intense crises of strife and death. Nature, like the saint, may need to pass to glory through a tomb. But the issue will indeed be glory, when He who is the Head at once of nature, of the heavenly nations, and of redeemed man, shall bid the vast periods of conflict and dissolution cease, in the hour of eternal purpose, and shall manifestly "*be* what He *is*" to the mighty sum. . . . What we now see and feel as the imperfections and shocks and seeming failures of the universe, we learn from this voice, a voice so quiet yet so triumphant, are only as it were the throes of birth, in which nature, impersonal indeed, but so to speak animated by the thinking of the intelligent orders who are a part of her universal being, preludes her wonderful future.

[1] From Mr Handley C. G. Moule's *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* ("Expositor's Bible"), pp. 226–7.

We have little to add to the above profound and suggestive words. Our faith in the destiny of creation awakens a deep religious interest in natural research; it gives elevation and significance to art. It lifts us above the pensive gloom and melancholy which cloud our delight in natural beauty, haunted as that is by the sense of doom and decay. The parables of Jesus, his two appointed sacraments, and all the symbolism by which nature and spirit, man and the outward world are bound together, acquire a richer meaning, an abiding value and glory from the belief that the whole creation of which we form a part belongs to Christ's redeemed dominion, and that every element and constituent thereof is destined, in its order and capacity, to share in the glory shed upon the universe by the unveiling of the sons of God.

The Lord's day is the Christian memorial and symbol of all that the resurrection of Jesus Christ betokens. As the last day of the week, the Jewish Sabbath, had for previous ages commemorated the finished work of the original creation, so by the consent of Christendom from the earliest times the first day of the week has been hallowed to signalize the beginning of the new creation, which dates from that glorious dawn when Jesus issued from Joseph's sepulchre, "the firstborn out of the dead."

The thought of the resurrection leads immediately to that of the *last judgement*. These two sublime events are linked to each other by the words of Christ and the teaching of his apostle Paul, and appear as successive scenes in the grand conclusion and final settlement of man's existence upon earth. The raising up of the Son of God,

which vindicates Him from the condemnation passed on Him by the world, is the prelude of the resurrection to life or judgement of the human race that He rules and has redeemed. Accordingly St Paul proclaimed to the Gentile world at Athens, in language borrowed from the Old Testament: "God hath fixed a day, in which He intends to judge the world in righteousness by a man whom He hath ordained; whereof He hath given assurance to all men, in that He raised Him from the dead."[1] The double office, twofold and yet one, of judgement and life-giving, formed the subject of our Lord's first discussion with the Jews of Jerusalem, as it is reported in the fifth chapter of St John's Gospel, verses 19–30. He testifies:

> The Father hath given all judgement [present and future] unto the Son. . . . He gave Him authority to execute judgement, because He is the Son of man. . . . There cometh an hour in which all that are in the tombs shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done ill, unto the resurrection of judgement.

In this last expression "judgement" becomes synonymous with condemnation,[2] or adverse judgement; and the resurrection itself, the condition in which the doers of good and ill respectively "come forth," reveals the distinction between them, parting them into two great bodies which proceed in opposite directions. The solemn picture of the day of doom which was drawn by the Lord Jesus in his later teaching upon the Judgement addressed to his disciples, carries this representation into further detail.[3]

[1] Acts xvii. 31.

[2] Comp. ver. 24; chap. iii. 18, 19, xii. 31, 47, xvi. 8, 11.

[3] Matt. xxv. 31–46.

Before the Son of man appearing "in his glory, and all the angels with Him" are "gathered all the nations of men," distinguished in their individual moral quality under the form of "sheep and goats"; whom He severs once for all, "setting the sheep on his right hand and the goats on the left," and pronounces on each the due sentence, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you," and "Depart from Me, ye cursed, into the eternal fire." However much in this awful representation may be set down as imagery, it is clear that the future Judge of mankind designed to deal out to good and evil equal measure, and to bring them into clear view, confronted with each other and set forth in all their essential details, in the final reckoning, in the audit of the books of life. This is the notion which St Paul had formed of the last judgement when he wrote:[1]

> We must all be made manifest before the tribunal of Jesus Christ; that each one may receive the things done in his body, according to the things that he did, whether good or bad.

As a Christian apostle Paul, preached the same "hope toward God" which he had entertained when a Pharisee, —to wit, "that there shall be a resurrection *both of just and unjust.*"[2]

The manifestation that is to take place at the last day will, we must suppose, be a complete as it will be a conclusive judgement. The "redemption of the body" of each of the saints will disclose his saintly character. In its new spiritual body the cleansed and perfected spirit will be perfectly expressed and for ever at home. This will be "the revelation"—the unveiling—"of the sons of God."

[1] 2 Cor. v. 10. [2] Acts xxiii. 6, xxiv. 15.

At the same time "the sons of the Evil One" will be clothed in some fitting retributive shape, "receiving back," on their side also, "the things done in the body." They must appear in their body of disgrace at Christ's bar, those of whom "the Son of man will be ashamed before his Father and before the holy angels"—ashamed to own them for men. When Christ recovers his redeemed from the grave, it does not mean that He barely gives them renewed existence, but an existence like his own, "conformed to his body of glory."[1] The mere reanimation of the man appears in St Paul's view, while it is a stupendous act of God, still to be a natural sequel to Christ's resurrection, as ordinary as the reappearing of any buried seed in the living plant. "God giveth it a body as it hath pleased Him, and *to each of the seeds a body of its own*."[2] The man of pure heart, reverent, loving, brave, and faithful, will be manifested in a bodily form that will shine with the beauty of his soul and reflect the glory of God. The "earthly, sensual, demoniacal" nature will be manifested in a body for which we have no name.

There is an earnest of this judgement in the manner in which moral disposition and habit tell on the physique in our present state. How often we see gentleness, sincerity, devoutness, the memories of a holy life, speaking in the looks and writing their legend in lines of spiritual beauty on features and expression; while meanness, cunning, anger and harshness, sensuality, levity, pride engrave themselves in characters no less indelible, which the keen eye will read under whatever disguise! Every motion of the mind, it is believed, registers itself and leaves its mark upon the

[1] Phil. iii. 21. [2] 1 Cor. xv. 38.

organism; and that register is never lost, though the matter of the body be dissolved. It is laid up somewhere in the archives of the High Court of Justice; and when "the great white throne" is set and "the books are opened," those records will be forthcoming under the all-scrutinizing and severe but merciful light of the great day of the Lord. So there will be consummated that parallel development in individual men and in the whole world of good and evil, of faith and unbelief, which is in effect a continual judgement, centring in the cross of Calvary and running on from man's creation in Paradise to Christ's return in glory.

The news of the coming of this day is an essential and glorious part of Christ's gospel to mankind. The apostle Paul speaks of it as "the day when God will judge the secrets of mankind, according to my gospel, through Christ Jesus."[1] The message of judgement was a constant and a very effective part of the apostle's missionary preaching. He proclaimed it to high and low, making his Roman judge Felix tremble as he "reasoned concerning righteousness, and temperance, and the judgement to come,"[2] and assuring the downtrodden slave, denied justice and human rights in this world, that "each will receive back the good he has done, whether bond or free," from a Judge with whom "there is no respect of persons."[3] Yes, it is good news—good news, at least, for all honest men—that the judgement day is coming and that Jesus Christ is the appointed Judge; good news for a world where evil has so long and so insolently triumphed, where force of hand and sleight of tongue prevail over simple truth, where the meek are

[1] Rom. ii. 16. [2] Acts xxiv. 25. [3] Eph. vi. 5-9.

so often thrust aside and the wise clamoured down, and the violent and boastful and the men who exalt themselves are exalted, gaining the synagogue's chief seats and the world's prizes and applause.

The Old Testament is full of complainings on this score. And its consolations were only half consoling. It often appeared as though God Himself abetted the injustices of life. Might trampled upon right continually, in the fierce national conflicts of the ancient world; and Providence seemed to range itself with the strongest battalions. Neither in the course of nature nor in the dispensations of human law can there be a complete retribution, an ideal adjustment between virtue and blessedness, crime and penalty, such as the conscience craves and demands. Yet the wise observer sees, on a sufficiently wide survey, an approximation between the two in the course of history and the progress of mankind, that supports his belief in a God of truth and righteousness. It is true now as in the psalmist's days, if you make a sufficiently large induction and judge by the general trend of affairs, that "evildoers are cut off: and they that wait upon the Lord inherit the earth."

> Though the mills of God grind slowly, yet they grind exceeding small;
> Though with patience He stands waiting, with exactness grinds He all.

We are told to wait and "see the end of the Lord." Not until the Christian revelation was made and this final act added to the drama of the world, was satisfaction attainable in this great matter. The promise of the Second Advent and the Day of the Lord affords the desired

certainty. The resurrection of Jesus Christ is the pledge of its fulfilment.

4. We anticipate therefore as Christians, looking for the return of the Lord Jesus from heaven, a complete *vindication of justice* in the affairs of men.

It would be difficult to overestimate the moral influence of this religious conviction. "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" pleads Abraham with the Almighty in the dawn of the days of faith.[1] To know that there is such a Judge who will do right, down to the smallest fraction and particular, what a strong consolation, what a magnificent hope is this to the struggling soul, the insignificant human item, who fights against cruel odds to keep a clean conscience and an upright walk, whose mouth will not utter the gainful lie nor his hand snatch the bread from a weaker fellow worker! He is pushed down in the scramble of life; only sin will save him from temporal ruin; but in the name of the Most High he spurns the temptation. He dies without a friendly voice to cheer or a hand to soothe his misery; but he dies saying, "I know that my Redeemer liveth"; he dies assured, like St Paul, of "the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give in that day to all who have loved his appearing."[2] From the injustice of men he appeals to the fidelity of God, from the wrongs of time to the eternal laws of righteousness. The day is coming when that appeal will be heard and answered.

While the weak are sustained, the strong and prosperous, the passionate and overbearing, are chastened by the thought of the coming of the day of God. How serious a considera-

[1] Gen. xviii. 25. [2] 2 Tim. iv. 8.

tion it is for those who hold power over the life and well-being of their fellows: "So then every one of us will give account of himself to God"![1] The Christian landlord deals with his tenants, the employer with his workmen, the mistress with her domestic servants, the tradesmen with his customers, under the sense of responsibility to God, and in the expectation of appearing in judgement before that Christ who claims the least of men for his brethren and will view a service or disservice done to any of his kind as done to Himself. "At the hand of man, even at the hand of every man's brother, will I require the life of man": so God said to the gathered fathers of the nations, when human society was reconstituted after the judgement of the Flood.[2] The rule which forbids bloodshed announces a far-reaching principle of divine law. It asserts the brotherhood of men before God, their equality in moral rights, the intrinsic sacredness of human life, the corporate nature of human society and the mutual responsibility of its members. Whatever act or mode of action, on the part of individuals or classes of men, weakens and impoverishes the life of others and exploits them for selfish benefit, prepares for the wrongdoers a searching enquiry and strict retribution at the hands of the God of all the earth. He hath said:

> The needy shall not alway be forgotten,
> Nor the expectation of the poor perish for ever.
> For the oppression of the poor, for the sighing of the needy,
> Now will I arise, saith Jehovah;
> I will set him in the safety he panteth for.[3]

During the ages of feudal and military rule, this doctrine of retribution at the bar of Christ, fearlessly proclaimed by

[1] Rom. xiv. 12. [2] Gen. ix. 5. [3] Pss. ix. 18, xii. 5.

his ministers, had an incalculable effect for good, in taming ferocity and checking the excesses of pride and power, in lightening the yoke of the oppressor and loosening the chains of serfdom. To this doctrine are due, more than to any other cause, the reverence that guards the office of the judge and the integrity with which justice is administered in Christendom. One has only to pass from Christian to non-Christian lands to feel the difference. The human functionary we regard as a vicegerent of God; he sits under the shadow of the great white throne; his sentences are passed subject to the revision of the dreadful day when the secrets of all hearts will be revealed. The Christian doctrine of the Last Judgement has supplied to the exercise of public law a grand and solemn background; it has brought to our courts of justice associations full of awe and dignity, tending to raise men above petty and mercenary and revengeful feelings—associations and sentiments whose influence extends to the humblest village magistrate. The security of civil and industrial life and the stability of modern society, based as they are on the uniform administration of law, owe much of their existence in this way to the gospel of Christ. England rules India at this moment through the reverence for British justice more than through the fear of British soldiery.

The doctrine that God is the fountain of justice belongs to all the great religions of the world. It was a vital element of Hebrew faith, and raised legal administration in Israel to a level far above that of surrounding peoples. The greatness of the Romans was due, besides their military prowess, to their manly sense of justice and their genius for law. But in their case, too, righteousness

possessed a superhuman character and majesty; and legal functions were surrounded with the strongest religious sanctions and solemnities. With the ancient, pious Roman, *jus* was inseparable from *fas*, human right was bound up with the divine. But the Christian idea of the day of the Lord gives to the justice of God a character much more precise and more impressive than it had hitherto possessed in human eyes. To Jewish prophetic thought "the day of the Lord" was a day of recompense for nations and institutions rather than persons. In heathen mythology, Egyptian or Greek, the judges of the dead were to be gods aloof from men, or men exalted after death for their integrity to the judicial office. Our Judge is God at once and man, one with the race whom He judges, and one with the Maker and Lawgiver on whose behalf He judges. He is endowed with the insight of human sympathy, and at the same time with the all-embracing knowledge and perfect rectitude of the very God. Jesus Christ is the one person ethically fitted and perfectly qualified to "execute all judgement," as He was to make the universal atonement for mankind.

A pathetic fitness is added to this ordination by the fact that the glorious Judge of the day of the Lord will be the despised Jesus of Nazareth, the crucified victim of Calvary, the man who was executed by this world's justice as a malefactor and a blasphemer. Of all the tragic scenes and strange reversals of fortune observed in human history, it will be the strangest to see Caiaphas and Pilate standing at the bar of Jesus! In answer to the high priest and the Sanhedrin He said, "Ye shall see the Son of man sitting at the right hand of power and coming in the clouds

of heaven!" In this reply He gave notice to the robed and throned and mitred lordships, to the kings and judges of the earth, that He, then scourged and gibbeted by them, will be their Judge in turn, and will send each one of these potentates to his eternal doom. How sublime, how satisfying is this assurance! how it "scatters the proud in the imagination of their hearts, exalting them of low degree"! This appointment guarantees to us the righteousness and mercifulness of the awards of the last day. We know the character, we know the antecedents, we know the spirit and temper of our Judge. Our destiny is safe in the hands of Jesus Christ. We are sure that He will be firm, that He will be wise, that He will be absolutely just and kind to every human being.

"Whereof He hath given assurance unto all men, in that He raised Him from the dead." God has by the resurrection of Jesus pronounced his judgement upon the man whom He has set to judge the world.

CHAPTER IX

THE LIFE ETERNAL

God gave unto us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.
—St John the Apostle

The Day of Judgement sets the seal of eternity upon the issues of time. Christ the Judge will approve and gather to Himself the fruit of the work of Christ the Redeemer. He will see of the travail of his soul, and be satisfied. The sacrifice of the cross will be fully understood, when its moral results are realized in the perfected kingdom of heaven, and its glory will shine for ever in the glorious estate of the Church redeemed by its virtue unto God and henceforth abiding in the immediate communion of the Son of his love. In the Apocalypse of St John, where the mysteries of future judgement and the splendours of the heavenly state of men are displayed, the Lord Jesus Christ, the centre of these sublime disclosures, bears his sacrificial title of "the Lamb"; the transcendent events depicted originate in his expiatory death, and the vast forces displayed in action revolve around "the throne of God and of the Lamb." "The Lamb" appears as the one "lamp" of the celestial city, which therefore needs no light of sun or moon; the entire plenitude of grace and truth, of love, intelligence, and joy, radiates from his once suffering and slain Person.

The views given us in Scripture of the eternal state and destiny of men, hard to interpret as they are and "dark with excessive bright," yet clearly indicate that God will be known to his children in the ages to come through modes of revelation in harmony with those familiar to us now; the nearer visions of his presence will display to them what is seen from a distance and through an obstructive veil, while they remain in this mortal flesh and in a world depraved by sin. In heaven as on earth, we rejoice to think, "the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall be the shepherd" of God's flock, "and shall guide them unto fountains of waters of life."[1] He will be the unclouded light of that world, as He is the clouded and ill-comprehended light of this. Still it will be his office to show us of the Father, and to unfold the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven.

In the life of the saints themselves the like continuity obtains. The future blessedness of believers is but the opening out and fruition of the blessedness that lies already germinally contained in their present faith and love to God. As "the latent" of the Old Testament is "patent" in the New, so the hidden things of the new covenant will be manifested in that newest and best covenant, never to grow old, which the resurrection of the just will inaugurate. Heaven is begun already in the bud. Amidst all our groanings we have "the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts, —the firstfruits of the Spirit,"[2] in which Christian believers taste beforehand, though they only taste, the essence of the bliss of heaven. The teaching of our Lord, as St John reports it, bears repeatedly upon this point.

[1] Rev. vii. 17. [2] Rom. viii. 23; 2 Cor. i. 22; Gal. iv. 6, 7.

He reveals to us eternity in the midst of time, the last judgement in process already and the eternal life being lived even now from day to day. He said:[1]

> This is the will of my Father, that every one that beholdeth the Son, and believeth on Him, should have eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. . . . Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth hath eternal life. . . . As I live because of the Father, so he that eateth Me, he also shall live because of Me.

In the great discourse of the Lord Jesus in the synagogue of Capernaum, from which the above sayings are quoted, He asserted that He contained in Himself the essential life of the world, so that the very act of believing in Him vivifies the soul and gives birth within it to the highest order of existence that God can bestow on man. The faith by which the soul partakes of Christ is, in truth, the vital principle of our spiritual being. Though scarcely visible to the eye, and no larger than a grain of mustard seed when compared with its future magnitude, such faith holds the promise and potency of all that a child of God may grow into when educated to his spiritual manhood and matured in the sunshine of heaven. Eternal life does not commence after "the last day" and when the Son of God has already "raised up" those whom the Father gave Him. He raises them up, because there is eternal life in them already. The body of glory and power which becomes theirs springs from its proper seed; that body of dishonour and weakness which was sorrowfully put away in the grave contained, under its disease and corruption, an immortal principle; it was a sanctified vessel of the Spirit of Christ. "What we shall be," as St John tells us,[2] "is not made manifest"; but it is manifest

[1] John vi. 27–59. [2] 1 John iii. 1–3.

that our future condition will be the outcome and expression, in a form suitable to the changed environment, of that which we now are, or are becoming, as the children of God.

Now this *continuity of personal existence*—the dependence of the future state upon present action, the genesis of our eternal life in time—is a moral consideration of primary importance. It is this belief which gives weight and seriousness to our current life. We are weaving day by day the web of an everlasting destiny, a robe of beauty clad with which we shall shine in the image of our Saviour, or garments of filth and dishonour in which we must hide from his presence and from the gaze of the holy angels. The martyrs "rest from their labours; for their works follow with them," while "the smoke of the torment" of their tormenters "goeth up for ever and ever; and they have no rest day nor night."[1] There is nothing arbitrary nor unprepared in God's judgements. The maxim, *Nihil fit per saltum*, is true of the passage from this life to the next. Retribution is evolution. Hour by hour we "work out salvation," or perdition, for ourselves and each other. And it is our conduct toward the Saviour Himself that acts with immediate and decisive effect for our eternal life or death. As we behave toward Jesus Christ, so shall we be for ever. "The word that I have spoken," He said of each man hearing his voice, "that will judge him at the last day."[2]

Hence the emphasis which Scripture lays upon the present moment. With intense, importunate, compassionate urgency it cries to the careless sons of men: "Behold, now is the acceptable time; behold, now is the day

[1] Rev. xiv. 6–13; comp. xvi. 6, etc.; 2 Thess. i. 6, 7.
[2] John xii. 48.

of salvation!" As we advance from stage to stage, life becomes less plastic in our hands, and gradually takes on the fixedness of eternity. We can sow less, we must reap more to-day than yesterday. At each step the range of our possibilities diminishes; the free play of life this side or that of the beaten track is limited; and we settle down, for good or evil, into the line of movement on which earlier decisions had projected us. The child may become anything; the boy may grow to much; the young man may turn out something—the old man is what he is! So we ripen for destiny, and assume that unchangeable character of our being, on which "the day will declare" the verdict of the All-Wise and Just. Youth is the seed-plot of age; this world of the next. We are already taking the trend of the curve along which we shall circle through limitless spaces of duration. An unending future —heaven or hell—is wrapped up for each in the fateful choices of our ordinary days and commonplace occasions.

Such is the aspect in which the gospel sets the relation of the two worlds, this side and that the grave. Our Lord's parables of judgement powerfully impress on us this sense of the infinite importance of the present, and the need for unsleeping vigilance and diligence in its improvement. No faith will prove saving in the end that does not mean faithfulness, that does not approve itself in fidelity to our unseen returning Lord. It is a keen and strenuous air that blows on the heights of Christian fellowship. Those who vaguely hope that the future will rectify a past wilfully spoilt and wasted, that their forfeited opportunities may be indulgently restored, and the faculties now depraved by misuse or effete through neglect may be galvanized into activity

by some new remedy hidden in the secrets of another world, are destined to a painful disillusion. On this point Matthew Arnold is a stern and wise moral teacher: [1]

> No, no! the energy of life may be
> Kept on after the grave, but not begun;
> And he who flagg'd not in the earthly strife,
> From strength to strength advancing—only he,
> His soul well-knit, and all his battles won,
> Mounts, and that hardly, to eternal life.

The seed of our future life is in the present. But it is equally important to realize that the fruit of the present is in the future. Eternal life is begun now and here: it is consummated *then* and *yonder*. Christianity, like no other, is an eschatological religion. It puts "the last things" first, and sees the end from the beginning. It is idle for us to protest against the reproach of other-worldliness; this should be our glory.[2] If our "conversation" is not "in heaven," our "life hid with Christ in God" and our affections set on the things that are laid up where He is, if we are not "looking for and hasting to the coming of the day of God," we may bear the name of Christ, but we are certainly not Christians after the manner of the New Testament, after the pattern of Jesus Christ and St Paul.

The remarkable fact is that the other-worldly people are precisely those who best appreciate this world, and do the most for its improvement; the men who have cared most genuinely and intelligently about the life to come, for that very reason have set the truest value upon this life; they have most correctly measured its forces and

[1] "Immortality": *Poetical Works*, p. 183.

[2] The expression "other-worldliness" was made use of by George Eliot, in her well-known Essay under this title, in an invidious sense, from which it deserves to be rescued.

realized the conditions under which it is carried on. Christianity, which sacrifices everything to the unseen and spiritual, has been the one redeeming force in the seen and actual. In the light of the next world this gets its highest worth—the bud prized for its coming flower and fruit. Earth is the vestibule of the palace of heaven; it is the school where God's sons and daughters are in training for their adolescence. How dull and trivial are the views which, for the most part, worldly people entertain of the world for which alone they are living! That religion unfits a man for business, or that care for his soul's salvation diverts him from philanthropy,—these are errors of the same nature as if you should say that mathematics impair the muscular powers, or that education weakens the family affections. God has not put us together so clumsily as that. What is for the health and soundness of one part of our being, makes for the health and soundness of the whole. We love our brother best when we love God most: we read earth truly in the light of heaven. As it was well said once for all by the apostle Paul—a man of the clearest, shrewdest sense in the things of this world—"Godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life which now is, and of that which is to come."[1] We should all of us be better fitted and inspired for the secular work of life, if we tasted more deeply of the powers of the life to come.

To the Christian the race of life has an invisible goal. He is "saved by hope"; he "walks by faith, not sight." Where for other men hope ends, his begins; and death is the threshold of his real life. This upward and forward

[1] 1 Tim. iv. 8.

look, this habit and attitude of one who "presses towards the mark" of a celestial calling, is a distinctive ethical token of Christian faith. Its effect on temperament is very noticeable, and singularly happy in the later years of life. Incited by this hope of our calling, we forget the things behind; we can shake off bygone sorrows and fears; the future, we know, will be better for us than the past. The Christian is travelling towards the sunrise; he sails storm-swept seas, but to a safe harbour. As age advances, and worldly ambitions droop and worldly interests shrink and the springs of natural pleasure fail, the mind turns to the sources of high, enduring joy, which open most freely as they are more earnestly sought; the river of life, that proceeds from the throne of God and the Lamb, pours its tide into the heart. "Our outer man decays," says the apostle; but he is more than compensated: the "inward man is renewed day by day."[1] He who is deeply joined to Christ our Life, though he seeks not tribulation, will glory in it when God sends it; he will find himself richer with impoverishment, and life stronger in him as the body's death approaches.

How greatly all this tends to serenity of spirit, to fortitude and self-possession and a noble endurance of the calamities of our human lot, it needs no word to show. The experience of multitudes proves what is said. Nor is it of small advantage in the daily conduct of life to hold the faith that all duty loyally discharged yields eternal fruit—however poor its material and perishing its form, however unsatisfying in performance to the doer. If done for God and man, in honest striving for the best, human work attains it send, and comes forth in the final result changed from

[1] 2 Cor. iv. 16.

weakness into power, from earth's clay to heaven's fine gold. "Your labour is not in vain in the Lord." No fragment of good endeavour perishes; no cup of cold water spent on the refreshment of a weary fellow traveller misses its reward.

> Let us toil on—the work we leave behind us,
> Though incomplete, God's hand will yet embalm,
> And use it some way; and the news will find us
> In heaven above, and sweeten endless calm.

Contemplating the life everlasting, we gaze upon a shoreless ocean. The subject of thought stretches in all directions out of sight. We do not think of the eternal as a state of being outside of and opposed to the temporal, rather as that in which the temporal is contained, into which, as each moment passes, it runs back and remerges. Eternity is immanent in time, and transcendent over it, as God in and above the world. The gospel of the eternal Son of God restores to us the sense of the everlasting. It reveals the Father in heaven, in whom "we live and move and are"; it raises us already, in some sort, to the eternal state; and Christ speaks of Himself as "the Son *of man*, which is in heaven." Thus He said to his disciples: "Ye shall see heaven standing open, and the angels of God ascending and descending."[1] In apostolic faith we discover this approximation of things mundane and celestial, this wedding of time with eternity, which takes place in the Christian consciousness: "Ye *have come near* to Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem; and to myriads of angels, the general assembly and church of the firstborn enrolled in heaven; and to a Judge, the God of all; and to the spirits of just men made perfect; and to

[1] John i. 51, iii. 13.

Jesus the mediator of a new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaketh better things than that of Abel."[1]

Surrounding and penetrating the earthly sphere there is another, larger world, bright and pure, calm and restful, to which our faith holds the key of entrance. Every place of prayer is to the believer a mount of transfiguration. For him things eternal mingle with the forms and presences of the visible sanctuary, and a celestial radiance is shed over its lowliest appointments. We are worshipping in the lower courts of a vast temple, whose holy of holies is behind a veil luminous with the divine glory, which it softens for our mortal eyes—a veil once and again so lifted that awful voices and mighty rushing winds have swept down upon us; and from behind that screen his presence has come forth, who is the High Priest over the house of God and has returned our representative, the bearer of our hopes and rights, to appear in the presence of God for us. The more vividly we are sensible of the commerce betwixt this world and that, so much the more shall we desire ourselves to pass the veil and to follow our Forerunner. This "hope of salvation" is the Christian's helmet, the crown and guard of his soul's best life.

O supreme bliss,
The circle, centre, and abyss
Of blessings! never let me miss
Nor leave that path which leads to thee,
Who art alone all things to me!

[1] Heb. xii. 22–24. We adopt Dr Moulton's interpretation of this passage, who identifies the "assembly and church of the firstborn" with the "myriads of angels" (God's elder sons and heaven's native citizens) of the preceding clause. See the *N. T. Commentary for English Readers*, or Cassell's *School Commentary*, in loc.

We shall contemplate, finally, the eternal life promised to his people by Christ, as it respects *the condition of the individual man*, his *relation to his fellows*, and his *relation to God*,—or, in other words, the heavenly state of the believer, of the Church, and of both in God. But the state of the blessed, we shall remember, is in all respects the consummation of the spiritual existence on which they have already entered; it is the full manhood of the life to which now we are born again of water and the Spirit, of the life in which we are here trained by the duties and sufferings assigned us in God's earthly providence.

1. "That we, with all those who are departed in the true faith of thy holy Name, may have our perfect consummation and bliss, both in body and soul, in thy eternal and everlasting glory; through Jesus Christ our Lord": such is the prayer with which we leave our blessed dead to their last sleep.

That *perfect consummation and bliss* begins with the redemption of the body, with the reinvestiture of the soul, clad from the time of the resurrection in the undecaying "house which is from heaven," that will replace for it the poor "tabernacle" of the flesh now painfully dissolved.[1] The apostle Paul lays the greatest stress upon the fact that this new organism will be "a *spiritual* body";[2] and much of the wealth of our future heritage in Christ is indicated to us by this word. A spiritual body signifies a body apt to the nature of the spirit, a dress fitted to the spirit that wears it, a frame which will present no hindrance to the movement and will of its possessor—much less be the instrument of temptation and moral

[1] 2 Cor. v. 1, 2. [2] 1 Cor. xv.

torture to him. Now this by itself is a pledge of inconceivable happiness. It means the complete victory of the Spirit in us—not such a subdual and denial and silencing of the carnal nature as takes place now, but the removal and disappearance of the incentives and occasions to sin, the destruction of those numberless points of vantage from which the enemy of souls pursues his war against the saints of God, to the last gasp of mortal existence. The man will be complete and at unity with himself, a son of God *revealed*, grown to the height and stature of his sonship,—in form and substance, in thought and aspect, and in finished and godlike act, "equal to the angels."[1]

No longer will the life of the Spirit in the believer be clouded, thwarted, stunted, sometimes crushed out of recognition, by a burdensome body and a harsh environment—his songs turned to sighing, his best feelings choked in utterance, his aims miscarrying in the execution and twisted by circumstances into the opposite of his honest purpose. That baffled and pent-up soul will have at last its time of blossoming; those jangled strings will be tuned to a music such as earth never heard and at which heaven will wonder, strings that have drawn their pathetic vibration from a life steeped in pain. "The world knoweth us not," writes St John; nor do we yet know ourselves. It is hard often for the sons of God to recognize their brethren. Many that are now last in common estimation will be first, and the first last. Even with the best will to show forth the Father's name, it is half concealed in those who bear it. But Christ's promise is: "I will *write*

[1] Luke xx. 36.

on him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem that descends out of heaven from my God, and my new name. . . . His servants shall serve Him; . . . and his name shall be on their foreheads."[1]

> His image visibly exprest,
> His glory pouring from my breast,
> O'er all my bright humanity,
> For ever like the God I see!

Now this conception of the heavenly state gives to it a very positive and practical import. Each living thing strives, by the principle of its vitality, to realize itself, to unfold its capacities and express its hidden idea, to *live out* its life. This is the end assured to the life of Christ in the soul. Every earnest word we speak, every attempt to develop our ideas, to form and set forth our convictions and impress them upon others, is the outcome, whether well or ill directed, of an instinct running through the animated universe. Christ promises to those who follow Him that this vital craving shall have its perfect satisfaction: "Then shall the righteous *shine forth* as the sun in the kingdom of their Father."[2] But, of course, there must be something in us to shine forth,—a life hid with Christ in God to be manifested. Men who have failed, who have been misunderstood, whose work, though wrought in righteousness, was marred by an ill-conditioned body or ungenial circumstances, will be amply vindicated in the manifestation of the sons of God. "The kingdom of heaven" will be theirs who were "persecuted for righteousness' sake." But calamity and earthly failure without this redeeming quality, and borne with none of

[1] Rev. iii. 12, xxii. 3. [2] Matt. xiii. 43.

the patience of Christ and the faith of the saints, bring no such recompense. "Faithful is the word: For if we died with Him, we shall also live with Him: if we endure, we shall also reign with Him."[1] Those who suffered with Christ on earth, bearing his burdens and fighting his battles and denying for his sake ungodliness and worldly lusts, with good right will receive the honours of his coming kingdom. Being first in spirit conformed to the image of God's Son, they will then participate in the glorious sovereignty upon which their risen and ascended Lord has entered. "Ye are they," He said to the Twelve on the night of the passion, "which have continued with Me in my trials; and I appoint unto you a kingdom, even as my Father hath appointed unto Me."[2]

Above all, there is one choice and peculiar satisfaction which the Redeemer promised his disciples before He left this world. It was the delight of *seeing Him* in his glory and *dwelling with Him* in his Father's house. This assurance —an assurance of value only to those who love Him, and in proportion to their love—relieved the prospect of shame and suffering which the last discourses of Jesus opened to his Church. He said:[3]

> If any man serve Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve Me, him will my Father honour. . . . I come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, ye may be also. . . . Father, I will that where I am, they also may be with Me; that they may behold my glory, which Thou hast given Me.

To the true disciple, to the man that has followed the unseen Master through years of unfaltering service guided

[1] 2 Tim. ii. 10–13. [2] Luke xxii. 24–30.
[3] John xii. 25, 26, xiv. 1–3; xvii. 24.

by his hand and voice, how transporting is this anticipation! More than the mother for the sight of her exiled son, more than the tenderest bereaved for lover and friend put far from him, does the Christian long for the day when he shall see the countenance of the Beloved and behold the glory of that Saviour whose face was once for us marred more than any man's. Christianity is, above all things, the religion of personal affection. Its hopes are the hopes of love.

2. Life never faileth, for love never faileth: the life eternal is the life of *the brotherhood of souls in Christ.*

The Church is not a secular, terminable institution. When earthly States come to an end and the book of history closes, she enters then upon her glory. The day of judgement is the wedding-day of the Lord's bride,—when He who "loved the Church, and gave Himself up for her," will be able at last to "present her to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing."[1] Following her Lord, she passes through humiliation to glory, through death to the perfected life of the resurrection and ascension. The hour will strike when all voices in all loyal worlds will sing together:

> Hallelujah: for the Lord our God, the Almighty, reigneth!
> Let us rejoice and be exceeding glad, and give the glory unto Him:
> For the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready.[2]

This delightful aspect of the great day of the Lord is conspicuous in the teaching of SS. Paul and John, who render more explicit what lay hidden in their Master's

[1] Eph. v. 25-27. [2] Rev. xix. 6, 7.

doctrine,—in that "joy of the Lord" that He held out as the best reward of the good and faithful servant.[1] The Lord's joy is no paradise of selfish pleasure; it is the gladness of an immense success, the glory redounding from the Redeemer's sufferings and echoed by that "great multitude, out of every nation, and of all tribes and peoples and tongues," who will be heard "crying with a great voice and saying, Salvation unto our God which sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb!"[2] Such will be the reward and satisfaction of the Son of man, such the joy of the Lord's wedding feast. His servants with their Lord will see fulfilled the hope expressed in his words: "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Myself." In the same hope the apostle writes: "When He shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be marvelled at in all them that believed."[3]

While the final judgement of Jesus Christ closes the history of the race of Adam and sums up the successive dispensations of earthly life, in the light of the gospel it becomes a new beginning, the prelude to a life of more intimate fellowship and exalted service on the part of the redeemed toward their Redeemer. The visions of the Apocalypse picture to us a bliss consisting especially in nearer access to the Lord Jesus, in a common and organized association with Him: "There shall be no more anything accursed: and the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be therein: and his servants shall do Him service; and they shall see his face. . . . And they shall reign as kings for ever and ever."[4] In the opening

[1] Matt. xxv. 21, 23; comp. Matt. xxii. 1–14.
[2] Rev. vii. 9, 10.
[3] John xii. 32; 2 Thess. i. 10.
[4] Rev. xxii. 3–5.

doxology of this prophetic book, He is praised who "loosed us from our sins in his blood; and made us a kingdom, to be priests unto his God and Father."[1] The new humanity gathered around the glorified Son of man is not a congeries of isolated units, but a sacred order, a corporate society. Purged of false and alien elements, when Christ shall have "gathered out of his kingdom all things that cause stumbling and them that do iniquity," it will realize without conflict or distraction the joy of a full and large activity, of common thought and common work under the headship of its heavenly Master,—the life of sons of God and the resurrection, equal to the angels. When death is abolished and judgement fulfilled and all enemies put beneath the feet of Jesus, his Church will win her emancipation and enter the kingdom prepared for her from the world's foundation. Then the Lord Christ will "deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father"[2]—not as though He should surrender or alienate from Himself the kingdom He has recovered; but He will present to the Father an accomplished task, an absolutely completed conquest. He will report concerning the whole mission of redeeming love, what He said once of that chief part of it fulfilled in the days of his flesh: "I have glorified Thee . . . by finishing the work which Thou gavest Me to do. . . . I have manifested thy name to the men whom Thou gavest Me." The race of men will thus in the end be made a true kingdom of God, as it was meant to be, a realm throughout which, with Christ the Son for its head and centre, God shall be "all in all." It is this consummation which St Paul signalizes in the saying we have quoted:

[1] Rev. i. 5, 6. [2] 1 Cor. xv. 24–28.

not that the ties binding Christ to his people will be dissolved, or that they will in any sense cease to be his because they become altogether God's; nay, the Son will say then more than ever to the Father, "All things that are mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them!" On the farthest horizon of thought, scanned from the loftiest height of his inspiration, the apostle Paul beholds Christ and the Church together rendering to God unceasing glory.[1]

Upon what developments the human race will subsequently enter, and to what new service its collective energies will be put, it is idle for us to speculate. But that such service does await the children of the resurrection we may be sure. "I came," said Jesus, "that they may have life, and have it abundantly": life is not quiescence, self-contained enjoyment; it is activity, fellowship, the energy and interplay of our correlated powers. When the Church has been bought by her Lord at so dear a price, schooled by so long and painful a discipline, tested in fires of judgement so keenly searching, it is not certainly in order that her existence may then terminate, that Church relations may cease and the members of Christ be dismissed to feast each man upon his individual share of happiness; this grand human institution, the product of the travail and agony of time, will be perpetuated in the life eternal and utilized for some splendid purpose hidden as yet in the counsels of God. The marriage day will assuredly not be the conclusion of the story of the Bride of Jesus Christ. Christians who regard the Church as a mere thing of time,

[1] Eph. iii. 21: Αὐτῷ ἡ δόξα ἐν τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ καὶ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ εἰς πάσας τὰς γενεὰς τοῦ αἰῶνος τῶν αἰώνων. Ἀμήν.

a construction of polity and ecclesiastical statecraft, or at best as a vehicle serviceable to help them on their private way to heaven, are taking poor and narrow views of salvation. Church life is a more spiritual thing, and the heavenly state more social, than they understand. It is a solemn moment when we unite ourselves to the Christian society. The event may be unimpressive and conventional in its surroundings; but we are entering on the inheritance of the saints in light, we are beginning that commerce of soul with soul which will expand and elevate itself for us till it blends with the communion of Christ and his beloved in the heavenly places.

Our religious fellowship is then no passing phase of experience, no alliance for limited and local purposes; it holds the essence of the life eternal. Jesus prayed that the communion of his disciples might be assimilated to the absolute union subsisting between Himself and the Father, and (as one may say) grafted into this: "that they may all be one; even as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be in Us." His beloved apostle writes: "If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us."[1] The divine regard to men, revealed by the mission of Christ, has no higher or further scope than this; it seeks to reunite for ever the human family under the headship and elder-brotherhood of Jesus Christ, to form in all of us a sincere and worthy affection for Him and for each other, and thus to bring about the corporate perfection of mankind,—the final Christian socialism. In these simple words of St John we discern the inmost spirit of the heavenly life.

[1] John xvii. 21; 1 John iv. 12.

When the wicked have been "severed from among the just" and humanity is purged of its foul and irreconcilable elements, and when our present defective and infantile bodily conditions have given place to the higher form of organic life awaiting the dead in Christ, a fellowship with each other will be possible for the children of God far surpassing the utmost that we now attain to. Friendship, companionship, the love of soul to soul, the participation of thought and feeling and activity will be subject to none of the chills and obstructions from which we suffer lamentably now. All will drink of the fulness of the one Spirit; all faces will be kindled with the brightness of the Redeemer's glory; ten thousand times ten thousand pure intelligences will be found sharing a common sentiment and moved at once, in every fibre of their refined and exalted nature, by the mighty pulses of life proceeding from the near presence and direct vision of the Infinite; and in that communion there will be a breadth, a richness, a rapture, a fulness of energy and joy, of which we can form at present but the most faint and dull conception. "Standing by the glassy sea, having harps of God," and "arrayed in their white robes," the victors in the wars of Christ sing the songs of salvation, inspired by the clearest vision of the glory that they praise, and with voices tuned to complete accord; and all creation joins in the refrain of their music, echoing their lofty triumph.

And there will be employment for God's children in we know not what co-operating ministries amongst the wide provinces of his universal kingdom, when the man "faithful over a few things" is made "ruler over many

things," and the saints are set to "judge angels"! when lowly service to Christ on earth is honoured by authority and office amongst the lordships of the heavenly places. There will be realms of knowledge to acquire, tasks of strength and resolution to achieve, worthy of the powers conferred upon the immortal sons of God. Such anticipations as these—and we appear to be warranted in forming them—make the future life an object of the brightest hope and the most eager yet tremulous desire.

To the student of history nothing is more impressive than the power of the ideal affections over the minds of men. Patriotism, for example, in the ancient Greek or the modern Englishman is an incalculable force. It turns the common man into a hero, lifting him above fear of death and love of gain, and sending him to endure every hardship in his country's service with a light and joyful heart. There is rising in our days the wider passion of humanity, which burns against the wrongs and sufferings of our kind, and takes no delight in the progress of one people gained at the expense of others, the sentiment that amongst ourselves values British wealth and dominion as an instrument to uplift the downtrodden and disinherited of other races. This temper is near akin to that loftiest of the social aspirations,—the hope of the kingdom of God.

A great and holy thing, even in its perversion, is love to the Church. It is the passion which sustains the hoary fabric of the Roman Catholicism, in spite of its huge errors and corruptions. While Church ties are so loosely held as they are to-day in the Free Churches, and depend in so many cases upon convenience and caprice, while Christian believers amongst us cherish so

little regard for the community to which they owe their birth and nourishment in the faith, while individualism runs rampant in our religious life, we must expect to see the influence of a purer gospel counterworked and the fruit of evangelical zeal to a large extent snatched away from us and absorbed by the sacerdotalist communions. We have the right to exalt the Church as much as they; we cannot make more of it than St Paul did, or than Christ Himself made of the kingdom of God and the fellowship of his brethren. We ought to be as churchly every whit as the most zealous "Churchman," only in a different sense. The loyalty and single-minded zeal of the Catholic clergy, their self-effacement in devotion to a divine cause, are noble public qualities and necessary in the service of Christ's kingdom. They are qualities which belong of right, not to any priestly order, but to all servants of the Lord Jesus.

The Church devotion of the Papacy centres in the hierarchy and ritual; that of Protestantism has its object in the Lord Himself and the people of the Lord. Our fathers at a great price gained our freedom from the Roman bondage; the rights of private judgement and of personal faith have been secured to us. This freedom of the sons of God is, surely, compatible with an effective discipline; it admits of the co-ordination of Christ's many members in his one body. The immense but scattered forces of the Churches must be compacted into a single instrument for the Spirit of God to wield; they will have to marshal themselves into one confederate host of the Lord before the day of Armaggedon, before the final battle of Christ against the Prince of this world is fought and won. The divisions of Protestants are their standing reproach,

and should cause us deep searchings of heart. It will always be felt, however strong our position on other grounds, that there is something amiss in Church principles that issue in paralysing disunion and waste of strength.

"There is one body, and one Spirit," says the apostle Paul in his great exposition of the unity of the Church,—"even as also ye were called in one hope of your calling."[1] We are associated in the pursuit of the high prize of the Christian vocation, which is nothing less than our collective perfection in the kingdom of God. We are animated by a catholic, identical hope; we are travelling in our many tribes toward the same city of the living God. Sharing this prospect, the people of Christ, divided by so many passing interests, are joined in one Spirit to their Lord. Our eyes meet as they turn toward the heavenly goal. All Christian souls are one in the sighing for redemption; East and West blend their voices in the catholic cry, *Veni, Domine Jesu!* The lower things divide us,—the temporalities and personalities of Church life, under the weight of which it is burdened in its earthly tabernacles and cumbered with much serving; the higher things, the treasures of the everlasting kingdom, are those which gather us into one. On these we shall set our hearts, if we are men that "follow after peace, and the things whereby we may build up one another." When our life is hid with Christ, when we rise above the fever and tumult of the present to the heavenly places where we sit together in Christ Jesus, our differences dwindle; the things that part Christian men from Christian men grow shadowy and vanishing! We who have "one Lord, one

[1] Eph. iv. 4.

Spirit, one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all," are we not one eternally ?

Mr Leslie Stephen, in his very able and subtle treatise upon *The Science of Ethics*, reduces the moral law to a statement of the principles of social vitality. He regards the ethical code prevalent in any community as being the expression of the demands of that community upon its members,—demands enforced upon them, not only by positive command, but still more by the instincts and nature which society forms in them. The "social tissue," to which the individual belongs and on whose integrity his life and well-being depend, has been created under certain fixed conditions; and the maintenance of those conditions is essential, in the given environment, to its continued life. This view of the moral law, as it is worked out and formulated in the development of society, appears to us, within its limits, to be a true and fruitful conception, and in harmony with Christian teaching. The rules of revealed morality are, in fact, the only terms upon which human beings can live together well and wholesomely; they are the conditions upon which the family thrives and the nation prospers. Human experience concurs with divine revelation in saying, "This do, and thou shalt live."

But we require a deeper basis, and claim a larger scope and outlook, for the social life than that which agnostic science recognizes or can admit. The society to which our faith affiliates us embraces *God and immortality*. The community to which we belong extends into the world unseen. It survives the shock of death, and will reconstitute itself, as we believe, under happier conditions in a new heaven

and earth. Such a vitality the Christian society possesses; and these powers of endless life, we are assured, are contained in the love that attaches its members to the divine and immortal Head. Its own vital force Christianity has imparted, in large degree, to the fabric of modern civilization. Does not Mr Leslie Stephen know that the faith and hope of Christ's gospel have supplied the most binding fibres in the social tissue of English and European life? That faith, while tending in its due application to produce the best and happiest social state possible upon this earth, works for a further, an eternal end. The existing social organism, let it be as highly elaborated and soundly conditioned as it may, to the last will have a history of struggle and suffering and decay. No legislation, no humanitarian scheme will ever abolish pain—or death.

This world can never become paradise again. We shall still want a better country, when science has done its utmost to make our planet a fit and pleasant dwelling for the race. The true use of this world and its social progress is to advance us towards a better, to prepare citizens for the new Jerusalem. Its conflicts are the travail pains out of which will issue the kingdom of the saints, the fulfilled vision of the seers of all ages of humanity. Far away they have caught the gleaming of the towers of Zion through the flying clouds and the smoke of battle; and the sight has inspired with unconquerable hope and courage the great warriors in the cause of God and man. If humanity is not to faint before its weary march is ended, if its social tissue is not to be exhausted by the ever-increasing strain and stress of life, it will need once more to see the ancient visions and

dream the divine dreams of its youth; it will need to renew its faith in the Christian hope of glory, and to lift up its eyes to the eternal hills:

> And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of the throne saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He shall dwell with them, and they shall be his peoples, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God: and He shall wipe away every tear from their eyes; and death shall be no more; neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain, any more: the first things are passed away![1]

3. *The vision of God* constitutes the essential blessedness of the life eternal. Here our thoughts must be reverent and guarded, for we stand before the veiled glory of the Most Holy Place.

"We see now," writes St Paul, "through a mirror, looking into a riddle; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I was known"; and St John, thinking of the mystery that hides the future condition of God's children: "We shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is."[2] Pronouncing the loftiest of his Beatitudes, Jesus said, "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God." The vision of God has been the longing of holy souls in all ages, and under many forms of faith. This is the magnet which draws upward every spiritual aspiration, the influence that sways the tides of our inmost being. The Power that made us and the worlds, the Lord of heaven and earth, the Love that sent out Jesus Christ from its bosom upon its errand, the Father of compassions who forgives our iniquities and heals our diseases, and who bestows his Spirit to dwell unseen

[1] Rev. xxi. 2–4. [2] 1 Cor. xiii. 12; 1 John iii. 1–3.

in our fellowship and within our hearts—*to see Him*, to know Him face to face, and to look upon his glory as He now looks into the depths of our weak and sinful hearts, what a blessedness beyond thought, an uttermost crown of life, to the favoured soul!

> I cannot see thy face, and live,
> Then let me see thy face, and die!

So Charles Wesley sang in his poetic daring, and touched the summit of the purest desire that visits the human breast. The love of God, born in us through the knowledge of the Father in Christ, nourishes this soaring hope, which burns in the spirit of the Christian with an ever-brightening flame, and pours its warm and steady light along the pathway that leads through death and the grave to the Father's house above. And yet does there not come to us along with this the trembling thought, which is the one noble element in the Roman doctrine of purgatory:

> Thou knowest not, my child,
> What thou dost ask; that sight of the Most Fair
> Will gladden thee, but it will pierce thee too?[1]

God's "glory" is set forth as the specific object of the beatific vision. That glory, as we conceive it, comprehends all that can be known of the Godhead—its ethical perfection comprised in the infinitude of the divine holiness; and added to this, the almightiness, the limitless knowledge, wisdom, skill of the divine understanding and administration; the eternity of the divine existence. The beauty, majesty, splendour, the uttermost and absolute perfection of God, visible in every direction and in countless modes of action and expression, fill the horizon of

[1] J. H. Newman's *Dream of Gerontius.*

thought, and will anew delight and overwhelm the spirit as ever and anew it searches into the depth of those counsels and ways that we now adore as past finding out.

We have in the Christian revelation marvellous disclosures of God. "With unveiled face," says the apostle, in contrasting Christian faith with the veiled face and hardened heart of Judaism, "we behold as in a mirror the glory of the Lord."[1] The word and Person of Christ are, in fact, a full and luminous reflexion of the invisible God. To individual believers there have been vouchsafed sudden and astonishing manifestations of God's power and love, rays of light that seemed to pierce the veil of the Holy Place; as when the three apostles beheld Jesus transfigured on the holy mount, and Moses and Elijah appearing with Him in glory; or when St Stephen, in the midst of the raging Sanhedrin, "looking steadfastly into heaven, saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God."[2] These were foregleams of the eternal vision, foretastes of heaven upon earth. Such a rapture the apostle Paul experienced, when he was caught up into the third heaven and heard unspeakable words, knowing not whether he was in the body or out of it. Every man who has known through the witness of the Holy Spirit the Father's forgiving love, has seen something of the excellent glory that shines from the throne of God and the Lamb. As the mind grows heavenward and the inner senses become more acute, we shall hear more distinctly and constantly the voices that cry one to another, "The whole earth is full of his glory." The created universe is "to the ear of faith," as Wordsworth felt it,

[1] 2 Cor. iii. 18. [2] Acts vii. 55.

a shell murmuring with the sound of the everlasting ocean of the Godhead, and to the interpretative soul

> imparts
> Authentic tidings of invisible things;
> Of ebb and flow, and ever-during power;
> And central peace, subsisting at the heart
> Of endless agitation.

There comes at intervals to the devout man communing with the Spirit of God in nature or in human thought to—quote the same poet again—

> that serene and blessed mood,
> In which the affections gently lead us on,
> Until, the breath of this corporeal frame
> And even the motion of our human blood
> Almost suspended, we are laid asleep
> In body, and become a living soul:
> While with an eye made quiet by the power
> Of harmony, and the deep power of joy,
> We see into the life of things.

Contemplation is the highest action of the spirit. The mysticism of the saints and the poets keeps the pathway open between the two worlds; it is Jacob's ladder on which angelic visitants and human imaginings pass up and down. But all our revelations and experiences of the Spirit are partial, fugitive, clouded and mysterious, compared to the full-orbed and immediate glory that is to be revealed to the risen and ascended saints, when gathered with their Lord in heaven itself.

Of the manner of this future apprehension of the divine nature and the faculties by which it will be realized, we can know nothing yet. So much we understand, that our present and future knowledge of God differ as "faith" from "sight." Faith is our highest faculty in this life; it

is the sense of the soul for God, as we are now constituted, and while held within the limits and under the discipline of the body of the flesh. The spiritual body will possess powers of directer apprehension; it will view the eternal things no longer "through a mirror" and by reflected light, but will gaze upon their substance and apprehend their essential form. How immense a gain this will be! but it is a gain ensuing from our present exercise and training in the life of faith. John Howe wrote upon this point:[1]

> Experience tells us daily how greatly sensible, present objects have the advantage upon us beyond those things that are spiritual and distant, though infinitely more excellent and important. When the tables are turned, the now sensible things disappear; a new scene, of things invisible and eternal, is immediately presented to our view; when the excellency of the objects, the disposedness of the subjects, the nature of the act, shall all multiply the advantages on this part,—how affective will this vision be, beyond what we have ever found the faint apprehensions of our so much disadvantaged faith to amount to! A kind message from an indulgent father to his far distant son, informing of his welfare and yet continuing love, will much affect; but the sight of his father's face will even transport him and overcome him with joy. . . . The day hath long been expected, and lo, now it is dawned upon the awakening soul! . . . He shall now stand no longer amazed, spending his guesses, "What manner of love this should be?" and expecting fuller discoveries, further effects of it, "that did not yet appear," but sees the utmost, all that his soul could bear or wish to see. He hath now traced the rivulets to their fountain, the beams to the very sun of love. He hath gotten the prospect, at last, into that heart where the great thoughts of love were lodged from everlasting; where all its counsels and designs were formed.

Such is the bliss of being, the life that is life indeed, the true *summum bonum* of humanity—to see his face whom

[1] In his treatise on "The Blessedness of the Righteous": *Works*, vol. i, pp. 86, 99 (edited by Rogers).

Jesus called "my Father in heaven," and in that unveiled light the Saviour's glory given Him by the Father. Here and hereafter, in part or in whole, there is but one true, sound, enduring and satisfying basis of existence for our human nature; it is union with God. "This is life eternal," said Jesus in his prayer to the Father, "to know Thee the only true God, and Him whom Thou sentest, even Jesus Christ." Here then let us cast our soul's anchor; on this goal let our eye and hope be fixed:

> As for me, I shall behold thy face in righteousness:
> I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness.

"Every one that hath this hope set on Him [on God] purifieth himself": so writes the apostle John. It is like that sees like. Love alone comprehends love; spirit converses with spirit; the holy soul beholds the Holy One its Maker; the cleansed eye takes in the true light. When St John in the verse previous to this says of the children of God that they "will be like Him, for" they "will see Him even as He is," we understand him to mean that resemblance to God is not the consequence so much as the pre-condition of the vision of God. God's children must be made like to their Father; for they are to see Him in his very self, and they cannot do this without first partaking of his nature: only "the pure in heart see God," and "in righteousness" the psalmist looks to "behold his face." It was in Jesus Christ, who out of the purity of his spirit looked evermore into the depths of the divine, that the apostle whom He loved had seen the proof of this law and realized the far-reaching spiritual insight which belongs to the pure-hearted—"even as *He* is pure!" We are to share in Christ's knowledge of God, to see the

Father as He did, in the same light, with the same kind of intuition born of sympathy.

The hope of the vision of God is, for the child of God, the last and highest incentive to the pursuit of moral perfection, of inward purity. He stands consciously and always in the presence of God, under his jealous and searching inspection, who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity; he will stand one day before the Judgement-seat where the secrets of all hearts will be revealed: but more than this, he aspires to stand at the last in the presence of his Maker an acknowledged son of the Most High, admitted to his presence and invited to the knowledge of the eternal Godhead. He is called to the fellowship of God's Son, Jesus Christ, who is for ever man with man while He is God with God in the heavenly places. And the path to that dazzling height of glory leads through the humble, difficult walks of daily duty, through the secret conflict with pride and indolence and passion, through self-denial and the world's reproach, and faithful, unnoticed service to men, through the conquest of the flesh by the spirit and the patient bearing of Christ's yoke, through love for the brethren, through zeal for the kingdom of God and its righteousness, through the practice of whatsoever things are true and honourable and pure and just and lovely. Christ and the New Testament supply us with no other criterion of the quality and bent of a perfect human character than that which is given us in the temple-song of David:

> Who shall ascend into the hill of Jehovah?
> And who shall stand in his holy place?
> He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart;
> Who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity
> And hath not sworn deceitfully.

> He shall receive blessing from Jehovah,
> And righteousness from the God of his salvation.
> This is the generation of them that seek after Him,
> That seek thy face, O God of Jacob.

We have dwelt the more at length in the concluding chapters upon the doctrine of the Last Things—not more largely however, in proportion, than did Christ and the apostles—because they are specially exposed to the scorn of unbelievers, and because they are held in these days with a light and uncertain hand by many amongst Christians themselves. There is apparent a very general tendency to regard such teaching as unpractical and visionary, as an outlying and almost supererogatory part of our religion. There could scarcely, it seems to us, be a greater misapprehension than this; scarcely any assumption could be made more contrary to the New Testament, and to the history of the Church and the actual working of the gospel. Jesus Christ was not of this world, and his religion is not of this world. He rules his Church from heaven; He promises his servants that they shall be where He is; He teaches us to pray and labour that earth may become like heaven. With the famishing multitudes around them and their ears filled with the clamour and distress of secular evils, the Lord's disciples sometimes forget his lesson drawn from the miracle of the loaves: "The bread of God is that which cometh down out of heaven, and giveth life unto the world." Amidst their busy and heart-consuming toil for the needs of the present, they are possibly in danger of losing the sense of the supreme truth which He then expressed: "This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent."[1] *Sursum corda!* We

[1] John vi. 29–33.

are blinded with the dust and vapour, worn with the toil, heated with the fever of the low-lying plains: "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills!"

The great Christian revelations of *the resurrection of the body, the final judgement of the righteous and the wicked*, of *the glory of the Church* and *the blessedness of the saints in the eternal vision of God* impress upon us with the most solemn weight the need of purity, sincerity, diligence, and zeal for the common good, in the prosecution of our daily life. We have learnt that a righteous and all-wise and merciful Judge is to determine the final awards of life; that an everlasting future is growing for each of us out of the things that we are now doing in the body, that we are sowing a harvest to be reaped hereafter in abiding glory or shame; that our entire nature is redeemed by Christ, and will be perpetuated in its personal integrity of body and soul. We see that we are summoned by the call of the gospel to an eternal life of fellowship with the Triune God, and with all pure and godlike intelligences, which opens before us in illimitable grandeur and height of possible attainment. Earth is made a scale to heaven; and our stewardship in the things of our temporal calling becomes an apprenticeship for the service and dignities of the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Let us then complete our creed:

> I believe in the Holy Ghost; the Holy Catholic Church;
> The communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins;
> The resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

The task proposed in these pages is now ended, so far as the writer's strength and present knowledge enable

him to discharge it. The work has grown upon him in its greatness as it proceeded; and he concludes, feeling how little has been said that is worthy of the theme, or commensurate with the breadth and fulness of the Christian life. What thought fails to grasp and language to express, is realized by the faith that works through love. We learn our religion best by practice, in worship toward God and right conduct toward our fellow men. Act, and you will know: live, and you will understand life, and immortality, and God.

SOLI DEO SALVATORI NOSTRO GLORIA!

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